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A MAGAZINE OF HUMOUR

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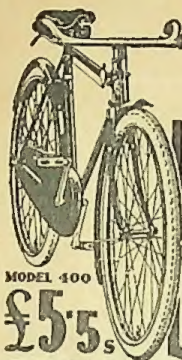
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"GAIETY"

A MAGAZINE OF HUMOUR.

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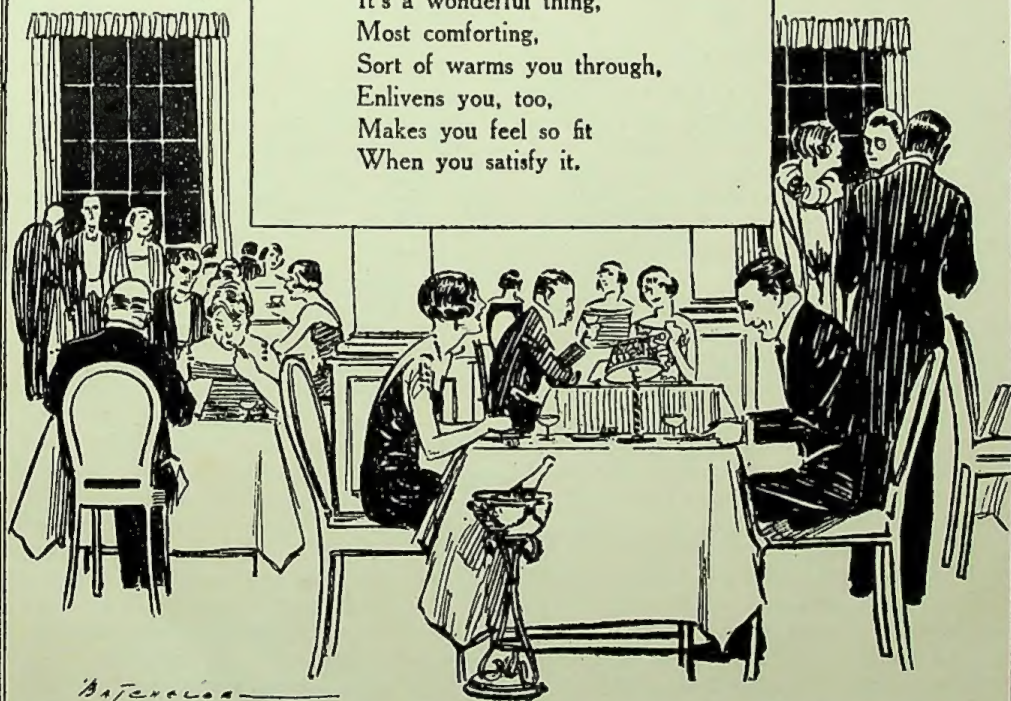
Gaiety

A MAGAZINE OF HUMOUR

No. 6. NOVEMBER, 1924. Vol. VI.

APPETITE

It's a wonderful thing,
Most comforting,
Sort of warms you through,
Enlivens you, too,
Makes you feel so fit
When you satisfy it.



THE BOYS

BY HOLLOWAY HORN

UNDER normal conditions, Mr. Sadler was one of the most highly-respected gentlemen in Mossford. In fairness to him it must be placed on record that the regrettable incidents herein recorded were produced by a set of conditions which were *far* from normal.

It happened on a Friday. He had seen his wife, his daughter, his son and both the maids—the entire troupe, as he called them facetiously—off to the bungalow, which he had taken for a month, at the seaside. He himself could not follow, owing to business reasons, until the following Wednesday. In the interval Mr. Sadler was, in spirit, a bachelor once again.

His excellent wife had made all arrangements for his comfort. Mrs. Murgle, the charlady, was to come in each day to get his breakfast and generally 'do' for him.

Mr. Sadler walked slowly out of the station. He felt rather lonely, but the feeling passed off before his taxi reached the City.

Usually he caught the five-fifteen to Mossford, but that evening he decided to dine at his club and afterwards, if the mood was on him, do a show. As luck would have it, dear old Pollexfen drifted into the club. They had been boys together years before and, as dear old Pollexfen was also a grass widower, they decided to be boys together again. It was all very jolly.

They enjoyed themselves very much indeed, in a quiet and gentlemanly way, as became their age and their position as responsible citizens. Just a bland, white wine with the fish, followed—

since they had not been boys together for a long time—by a magnum of Heidsieck to celebrate their resuscitated youth. Half a bottle of the club's 'ninety-two' port finished up a really excellent little meal.

They decided not to go to a show after all, as it was already too late. Mr. Pollexfen asserted that he could still beat Mr. Sadler at snooker. Possibly he did, but no one, not even the marker, was quite sure. But it was a very amicable, if rather lengthy, game, marred ever so slightly by the cloth which Mr. Pollexfen tore in a praiseworthy, if unsuccessful, effort to pot the green.

So excellent had been their dinner that the rent in the otherwise impeccable surface of green struck the two boys as being a priceless joke. They shook with merriment, and even the marker—the most depressed youth in Clubland—saw a joke somewhere in the proceedings and allowed his features to relapse. *He* wasn't paying for the cloth, of course.

Mr. Sadler ordered two doubles and a soda sp-sp-sp-split.

So, in a little while, did Mr. Pollexfen.

They told each other stories of the old days and agreed heartily over the splendid times they had had together. Indeed, those dear old days well deserved another toast, and had it.

Mr. Pollexfen should have gone to the station beyond Mr. Sadler's, but he had not the slightest intention of leaving the friend of his boyhood, and alighted at Mossford with him. They were rather late and Mossford's only cab was, unhappily, engaged. So they walked.

They were very, very careful with



LESLIE P.
MARCHANT

Drawn by Leslie P. Marchant.

Old Lady (a new local resident): "IS THERE A SWEEP IN THE VILLAGE, LITTLE BOY?"

Little Boy: "YES, MUM—FIRST AND SECOND DIVISION CLUBS ONLY, AND TICKETS A TANNER A TIME."



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

Reporter (interviewing victim of serious smash): "Now I JUST WANT YOU TO TELL ME IN YOUR OWN WORDS EXACTLY HOW THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED."

each other as they ambled down the main street of Mossford. Each was inclined to believe that the other was mildly elated—not drunk, of course—there is an unnecessary coarseness in that word. They helped each other on to the pavement very charmingly and generally provided an object lesson in politeness for a generation which is not always as polite as it might be.

They came to the Avenue and took the first turning to the left. There are those who say that, at this juncture, both gentlemen were singing, but there is no reliable evidence on the point. Mr. Pollexfen admits *humming*, but any gentleman on his homeward way may surely hum.

Strictly speaking, of course, Mr. Pollexfen was not on his homeward way;

he was steadily walking away from his home—more or less steadily, anyway.

"'Smy house," said Mr. Sadler and pulled up. "Cummerlong in. 'Sorl ri'. Missisout. Another li'l drink . . . wouldn't do's any harm."

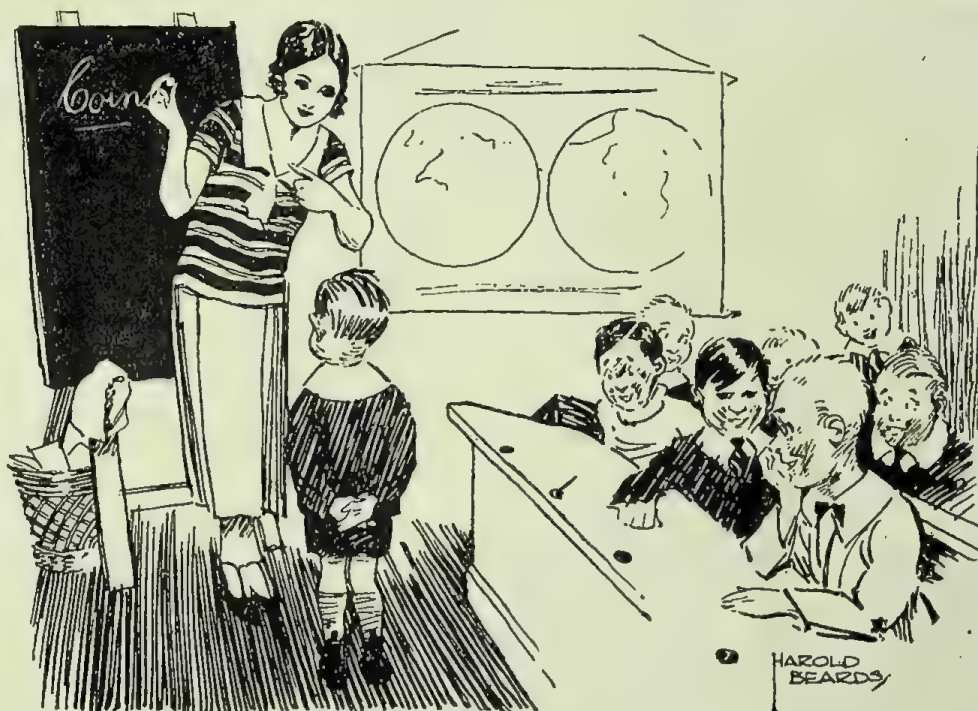
"Right oh!" said Mr. Pollexfen stoutly.

But at this juncture they caught a snag: Mr. Sadler could not find his key.

Very solemnly he went through all his pockets.

"'Stornary thing," he said, and went through all his pockets again with even greater solemnity.

"Not there, my chile," he said and, for some obscure reason, laughed. "No good knocking 'em up," he said; "they're not there."



Drawn by Harold Beards.

Teacher (giving lesson on coins to inattentive class, holds up a half-penny): "WHAT'S THIS?"

Small Boy (with sudden interest): "'EADS!"

"Le's try my key," suggested Mr. Pollexfen helpfully.

"Why not?" demanded Mr. Sadler.

The key went in with startling ease but, beyond that, it was not, for the moment, successful. First one and then the other attempted to turn it and, in the end, Mr. Pollexfen partly succeeded. Spurred on by success, he redoubled his efforts and broke the key.

"Now we've neither of us gotter key," said Mr. Sadler gravely. "Well, I never!" he went on. "Here's mine all the time in my overcoat pocket. Very c-c-c-urious."

The key went into the lock almost as easily as Mr. Pollexfen's had done. But part of Mr. Pollexfen's was still

there and very unreasonably prevented Mr. Sadler's from functioning. He managed to turn it a little, but there it stuck, and refused to move either way.

"Le's get through kitchen window," suggested Mr. Sadler. "There's nobody in."

"Good idea. And then we'll have another li'l drink. Won't the window be locked though?"

"Le's go and see."

Mr. Sadler led the way, ably supported by his friend, Mr. Pollexfen, and in this order they reached the kitchen window. It was very dark at the side of *Wisteria* (as Mr. Sadler's house was so prettily named), and he had to feel about for the window.



Drawn by Seymour Hurley.

"HAVE YOU SEEN ANYTHING OF A SILK HAT THAT BLEW ROUND THIS CORNER?"

"No, sir. Nothin' o' th' sort ain't passed me, sir!"

"'Sopen!" he said to his friend after an interval. "We'll 'ave that li'l drink in about two shakes of a d-d-d-duck's tail."

Very noisily he raised the window and, feet foremost, with Mr. Pollexfen's assistance, persuaded his somewhat portly person through the window. Mr. Pollexfen followed, but his agility was not as great as his friend's—although his portliness was greater—and he became a comparative fixture half in and half out of the kitchen. Mr. Sadler alternatively pushed and pulled, but suddenly ceased from either.

The house was not empty! Someone was coming downstairs.

"There's burglars!" said Mr. Sadler

in a hoarse whisper. "We've disturbed 'em at work."

"Push!" replied Mr. Pollexfen. "I wanna get out. I'm at their mercy like this."

So Mr. Sadler pushed with renewed energy. As a result, Mr. Pollexfen gave way and subsided more or less gracefully on the path outside.

The steps were coming towards the kitchen in which Mr. Sadler was now alone. He followed his friend—or, at least, the nether part of his friend—through the window in a manner which did a gentleman of fifty considerable credit.

"We shall have to notify police," said Mr. Pollexfen. "Le's go and do



Drawn by A. Gelli.

The Lady (handing beggar very generous assortment): "HERE ARE A FEW THINGS FOR YOU. POOR MAN, I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS?"

The Beggar (almost overcome): "NOT MANY, LADY, NOT MANY."

our duty. Think of the women and children. . . ."

"Come on then. I'll bet you don't find a bobby within a mile."

But on this point Mr. Sadler did the police an injustice, for they found no less than two policemen at the front gate.

"Constable," said Mr. Sadler with wonderful dignity, "there's—hic—burglars in my house. I . . . I give 'em into charge."

He leaned a little against his friend, apparently slightly overcome with his own dignity.

"There are two of you fellows, aren't there?" asked Mr. Pollexfen anxiously. "The light's a bit tricky."

"Yes. An' lots more in reserve," said one of them cheerfully.

At that moment the front door opened to disclose a furious gentleman attired in a long, red dressing-gown and a tasselled cap. This apparition appealed to some deep and rarely touched sense of humour in Mr. Pollexfen, who collapsed with helpless laughter. Mr. Sadler was still leaning gently against him and he, too, was involved in the collapse.

"Disturbing respectable people at this hour of the night! Scandal . . . drunken orgies . . . men of their age . . . give them into charge. . . ."

The gentleman in the dressing-gown was becoming almost incoherent. The tasselled cap shook with his indignation.

With the assistance of the police, the two gentlemen were re-established on their feet.

"Who . . . are . . . you?" demanded Mr. Sadler of the red dressing-gown, with, under the circumstances, striking dignity. "And what are you doing in my house?" he went on sternly.

"Sergeant, I give these persons into charge for burglariously attempting to enter this house," red dressing-gown retorted.

"Seems to me, sir, if I might say so, there's been a bit of a misunderstanding. I knows this gent very well by sight."

The sergeant had recognised Mr. Sadler in the light from the hall. He spoke easily, as one remote from the wild emotions around him.

"I can quite believe that," snapped the red dressing-gown.

"This is my house, isn't it?" demanded Mr. Sadler. "*Wisteria* . . ."

"*Wisteria* is in the next road, sir. You've made a bloomer. I take it, sir, you don't insist on pressing the charge against these gentlemen? Boys will be boys, as the saying is," added the sergeant with commendable solemnity.

"If my wife had been at home she would have been gravely upset," a somewhat mollified red dressing-gown pointed out.

"Isn't she?" asked Mr. Pollexfen, to whom an idea had come.

"No, sir. Fortunately. Or your outrageous conduct might have had serious consequences. My wife is an invalid."

"Then there's no harm done. My wife's away at sea; so's my friend's. So yours. Le's all have a li'l drink to show no ill feelin' . . ."

"Certainly not!"

The door was suddenly closed and they were alone in the night. Apparently the red dressing-gown was not as warm as it appeared.

"He doesn't deserve to have his wife away," said Mr. Pollexfen, after giving the matter serious thought. "I don't like him."

"I've 'eard of gents mistaking their 'ouses before," said the constable, as one who observes and records a curious fact. "But to mistake a street's new to me."

"Very orig . . . rig'nal chap, Mr. Sadler. Always was. Le's all go back with him and have a li'l drink."

"I don't know about that," said the sergeant, remembering the presence of his junior officer. "But we'll certainly see you as far as *Wisteria*, in case you make any further mistakes."

Both gentlemen were very serious, for there is a steady, sobering effect in the mere presence of a London policeman, and still more in the presence of two. By way of light conversation, Mr. Pollexfen stated that the moon behind the elm trees in the Avenue was very beautiful.

"Oh, moon! Oh, l-l-l-lovely moon!" quoted Mr. Sadler in a moment of exaltation.

"Not a bad, ole moon," said the sergeant with a droop of his left eyelid to the constable.

They came to the road in which Mr. Sadler lived.

"Jus' like the other road, isn't it?" demanded that gentleman of the representative of the law.

He seemed to regard the similarity as a grievance.

"Just," agreed the constable.

And ultimately they came to *Wisteria*.

"An Englishman's home's . . ." began Mr. Sadler, who was apparently deeply moved by the sight of his domicile. The great thought, however, did not achieve completion.

"Well, 'ere we are," said the sergeant. "Got your key, sir?"



Drawn by Wal Law.

Anxious Wife: "FOR GOODNESS SAKE, JOHN, DO TRY AND SCRAMBLE OUT SOMEHOW. EVERY TIME YOU SLIP UNDER THE ICE, IT MAKES ME GO HOT ALL OVER!"

Mr. Sadler went through all his pockets very solemnly.

"Strange!" he said to Mr. Pollexfen.

"Very strange! I must have lost it."

"Try mine," said Mr. Pollexfen, and went through *his* pockets even more solemnly.

"C-c-c-curious thing," said Mr. Pollexfen. "'Stroinary c-c-c-coincidence. Both los' our keys."

"Better get through the kitchen window," suggested Mr. Sadler, with some dim memory of having said so before, possibly in a previous existence.

The side door was bolted, but the friendly constable climbed over and let them in.

The kitchen window was, unfortunately, locked.

So was every other window on the ground floor.

"Very awkward," said the sergeant, without emotion. "Better 'ave another look in your pockets."

This seemed very sound advice and they acted on it.

"Got him!" announced Mr. Pollexfen and produced the broken remnant of his key.

The sergeant examined it.

"It's very good as far as it goes," he announced.

"Why, of course," smiled Mr. Pollexfen. "I broke it in the lock of the other house. But it doesn't matter," he went on helpfully. "It wasn't the key of this house, anyway."

"And my key's fixed in the lock in



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

Mr. Wadzer-Knowtz: "DO YOU THINK FOUR ROWS WILL BE WARM ENOUGH, M'DEAR?"

that house, too. Just fancy forgetting! Let's all go back and get it. We'll knock that old gentleman up and tell him how sorry we are that we disturbed him. Can't do more than apologise, can we?"

"No, you stay here," advised the sergeant firmly. "My mate and I will get it. You sit on the steps until we get back."

"Sp-sp-sp-splendid!" said Mr. Sadler, and sat down as the sergeant had suggested.

Mr. Pollexfen also sat down, but not with the same success as his friend. The sergeant recovered him and propped him up against Mr. Sadler. There was the same peculiar drooping of his left

eyelid to his colleague as they set out to find the key.

They were some little time in getting it out of the lock, but in the end they were successful and returned to *Wisteria* to find the two gentlemen peacefully and serenely asleep where they had left them.

"Babes in the wood," said the sergeant, who had a pretty wit.

"Seems almost a pity to disturb 'em," said the constable. "I suppose we'd better, though."

"Hi! Here's the key," the sergeant shouted.

"Whassat?" Mr. Sadler asked dreamily, but without any real curiosity.

"The key!" shouted the sergeant.



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Master : " DID YOU PUT ANY ' *This Side Up—With Care* ' LABELS ON THAT CASE, PATRICK ? "

Patrick : " SHURE AN' OI DID THAT, SOOR. PLASTERED THE BOX ALL OVER WID 'EM, OI DID, SOOR ! "

" Goodni' ! "

A snore.

" We'll put the key in the lock and they'll find it when they wake up," decided the sergeant. " The milkman'll wake 'em up, anyway."

But the charlady was the first arrival in the morning.

The two boys still slept.

She woke them with considerable difficulty.

" Left my key at home," explained Mr. Sadler sheepishly, as he rose to an upright position.

" The key's in the lock, sir," she pointed out with more tartness than was absolutely necessary.

" How very odd ! " said Mr. Sadler, acutely conscious of what is technically known as a thick head. Since it was impossible to save the situation, he added : " Not a word, Mrs. Murgle. Here's . . . "

A slight financial transaction followed and at last Mr. Sadler, followed by his fellow-sufferer, Mr. Pollexfen, entered *Wisteria*.

Four hours later they came down to breakfast. Mrs. Murgle—a woman of little imagination—had provided bacon and eggs for them.

On mature consideration one may be doing the charlady an injustice. In any case, she thoroughly enjoyed the bacon and eggs.

OUR NEW FIRE-ENGINE

BY BASIL MACDONALD HASTINGS

FOR a long time we in Daydream Ferry and SleeveLove Magna had a fire-engine that had to be pulled or pushed. For some odd reason this was regarded as a reproach to the two hamlets, and letters on the subject were written to the *Daydream Ferry and SleeveLove Advertiser* by "Colonel," "Vanitas Vanitatum" and "Seventeen Years a Resident."

I remarked to my wife upon this correspondence.

"It augurs at least two things," I began, not without a little resentment that she was trying to listen, knit and play patience all at the same time.

"In the first place I shall be asked to subscribe for a new fire-engine, an affair driven by a motor."

"Well, so you should. Suppose we had a fire. Wouldn't you be glad you had subscribed?"

"We never shall have a fire. I have been married for fifteen years, and for all that period I have paid annual premiums for the insurance of house, furniture, clothes, jewellery (if any) and live-stock against fire. Therefore it follows, as death follows life, that nothing in the house will ignite."

"Do men talk like that in clubs?"

I begged her to try to lift herself to the masculine level of wit. She sniffed and, to my intense gratification, failed to notice a nine that might have been put on an eight.

"Not only do I anticipate being asked for a subscription, but I am almost certain to be asked to the christening."

"What on earth have christenings to do with fire-engines?"

"A great deal. Fire-engines are

christened just like life-boats and battle-ships. Didn't you know that? A bottle of——"

"Yes, yes. Any excuse."

"A bottle of champagne of the cheapest variety is cracked over the bow of a ship and also over the—er—carburettor of a motor fire-engine. Would you go?"

All came to pass as I had foretold. The subscription list was opened and I was bullied into appearing upon it. My name, of course, was spelt incorrectly, and for three months I received letters addressed in this fashion from the philanthropic societies of the universe. I was invited to the christening, went, met Jones, who borrowed a fiver, and came home.

That night we had a fire.

A coal or a small log of wood waited until we had gone to rest, and then leapt from its nice hot bed on to the carpet and came into contact with a hanging fringe of the cover of my easy chair.

My wife woke me.

"I smell fire," said she.

"Impossible. Think of the policy."

"The policy! You must save it."

Do you have to save insurance policies? It seems very unfair, because it involves the necessity of insuring against the loss of them. I told my wife this as I went through the first movement of getting out of bed when you want to stay there.

"Are you mad? Wrap your head in a wet blanket and go down and save what you can."

I walked downstairs and was profoundly astonished to find the room, where I work and keep my books, full of smoke. Now smoke meant fire. A fire in one's own insured house! It defied all the traditions. I sat down in the hall and smiled like a startled child.



Drawn by Frank Whitburn.

Young Dentist (nervously): "I—I HAVE A TERRIBLE CONFESSION TO MAKE, MISS SMYTHE. AFTER I HAD GIVEN YOU GAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE, I—I KISSED YOU!"

Fair Patient: "WELL, I SUPPOSE I SHALL HAVE TO FORGIVE YOU. BUT (with charming ambiguity) I HOPE YOU WON'T FIND IT NECESSARY TO GIVE ME GAS AGAIN!"



Drawn by H. Cutner.

"AN' PHWAT'S BECOME OV MOIKE FLANAGAN?"

"POOR CHAP! HE MISTOOK A TAXI-HORN FOR THE MID-DAY WHISTLE, AN' STOPPED WORK CROSSING THE STRAND!"

My wife came down with a blanket she had steeped under the bath-room taps.

"Wrap that round your head. It will save your eyes and your throat. Hurry! Must I do it?"

I swept her aside, took the blanket and turned myself into a sort of wet tent. I suffered loss of personality and dignity, but I think I was considered a man.

It is very difficult to find one's way with a wet blanket over one's eyes.

"Are you there? Are you alive?" my wife kept shouting.

I answered her, but she now says all she could hear was sneezing and some allusions which showed I was thinking of my possible destination after death.

She and Grace, the parlourmaid, stood at the door and threw jugs of water into the room. Every time I nearly reached the tin box in which we keep the insurance policies and the Facts About The Bank Overdraft, a deluge of cold water would send me staggering. I blame neither my wife nor Grace. They were coughing and crying with the smoke and their conduct was undoubtedly plucky. But Flanders under canvas on a wet night was a picnic to my unhappy predicament.

At the height of the alarm, my wife telephoned to the police station for the new fire-engine. This had the desired effect and I wish she had thought of it before. The fire went out, the smoke



Drawn by Geo. Davey.

"I NOTICE YOU ALWAYS WEAR A BOWLER HAT, REGGIE. WHY DON'T YOU TRY A CHANGE SOMETIMES?"
 "CAN'T BE DONE, OLD GIRL. I LOOK SUCH A SILLY ASS IN ANYTHING ELSE!"

dispersed and we discovered that the damage amounted to little more than a ruined carpet, a wrecked library and a saddened husband.

But the tragedy was not over. There is always room at the bottom, as the pessimists are eager to remind us. When that new motor fire-engine arrived, it caught fire.

It came along to the house all right, the crew having been assembled from their beds in just under three quarters of an hour but, when it stopped, it kind of exploded. There were a series of cracks and snaps, smoke poured out of every seam and then came a lick of flame.

My wife, Grace and I dashed indoors

and filled jugs. The crew of the fire-engine watched us at first in dumb amazement. Having come to put our fire out, they could not achieve the feat of realising that it was now a case of our quenching their fire. But when they got hold of the idea, I must say they were splendid.

The fire in the engine was put out in under half an hour, and not a single person was injured. For this feat we have been complimented in the *Day-dream Ferry and Sleeve Love Advertiser*, but the feeling in the district is against us. Folk think that but for our carelessness in having a fire, the district would still have its perfectly good fire-engine.

THE FOX'S SKIN

BY GEORGE WODEN

THE sunlight streamed in at the carriage window. The meadows swung gently past. The hoar frost was gone, and the day was warm with the soft glory of October. Brown, gold, russet, fading green went by, in splendid pageantry. Yet Duncan Lenzie grumbled. The beauty was for him, for everyone to see; yet he would not see it.

He was convinced that he had wasted his day and, if he had been told to gaze upon the view, and find enjoyment there, he would have scoffed. Fields, bushes, trees—pooh!—they were always there. All right if they were his, no doubt. To-morrow he would sing praises for these things which the Lord hath made, but to-day was a week-day, and he had wasted enough of it already. By the time he arrived home it would be too late to do anything except go to the moving pictures. His Bible Study address was not prepared; he did not feel in the mood to prepare it; yet he must: it was being advertised. He ought to be at the Cross to superintend the distribution of leaflets among the shopping crowd. Besides, he had to iron his Sunday trousers; they were growing baggy at the knees. He had promised his wife to peel the pickling onions; they made her hands so bad; and he was so fond of pickled onions. And he would not have time for anything.

"That's what comes of trying to do a charitable action," he told himself dismissively. There was no consolation in the thought.

His Aunt Alison was ill. At least, she had been supposed to be ill; and he

had made a special journey to see her, neglecting all his duties for her sake, only to find her digging up potatoes in her garden. He was naturally resentful, for he had not wanted to go. Jane, however, had said he ought to go, and he had submitted. It had been his duty, of course. Aunt Alison owned her own house, and she had dividends from government stocks, shipping companies, cotton mills and other sources which Duncan had not had time to examine when he had peeped into the private drawer of her bookcase. It was certainly his duty to go and see her when she was ill. But when she was not really ill she had no right to waste his time, or his money either—three and threepence return, and nothing for it, not even a few of the potatoes.

The train slowed down, with a grinding of the brakes. A station slid alongside, and stopped. Into the compartment swung a bulky package of dark oilcloth, held together by a strap, and after it climbed a hook-nosed man with a beard. A porter slammed the door, and the station slid away.

"Fine day," ventured the stranger.

Duncan grunted. He was not prepared to agree. The stranger, however, being affable, misinterpreted the grunt, and plunged into intimate conversation, in a husky voice with a foreign accent which Duncan naturally distrusted.

"You might perhaps be a married man, yes? Or perhaps just fond of some nice lady, vat?"

He did not seem to expect an answer. He was busy unfastening the strap around the oilcloth package. Duncan's curiosity was roused. He had often



Drawn by A. T. Smith.

Little Visitor (to hostess who is about to bath her family of dolls) : "I SEE YOU ALLOW MIXED BATHING !"



Drawn by Vernon Sheering.

New Vicar : "DO YOU EVER HAVE ANY WHIST DRIVES DOWN HERE?"

Parishioner : "I CAN'T SAY AS WE DO, SIR. WE 'AS A CHARRYBANG DRIVE ONCE A YEAR, BUT I AIN'T NEVER 'EARD TELL OF ANY OTHER SORT OF DRIVES, SIR."

seen the exteriors of such packages and had guessed what their contents were. Guesses are not a satisfying diet for curiosity. He leaned forward. The stranger turned, shielding the package from view with his body. Then, carefully, from a cardboard box, he extracted a paper bag like a cushion and from the bag he took a magnificent fur, the skin of a fox—eyes, ears, legs, brush and all. Duncan's admiration momentarily ran away from his natural caution. Then he smothered it with a resentful obstinacy. He was not going to buy anything.

"I don't expect you to buy dis," said the stranger, shaking out the fur to improve its appearance. "The price

is—vell, you could not afford. But you can admire it for noding."

Duncan felt insulted. He had ten pounds in his pocket. True, they were not his, but he could pay them back. He had Savings Certificates. His wife had money in the Corporation. His Aunt Alison was rich. For a moment he was proud of his Aunt Alison.

"Don't be too sure," he said proudly.

The hook-nose man shook his head.

"Dirty pounds," he said. "Big shop, big price, big profit. You couldn't buy it for twenty. Feel it. Make you vish you vas rich."

The fellow chuckled. Duncan squeezed the brush. Lovely fur. No mistake about it. He stroked the back.



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Postman : "NEW DOCTOR GOT ANY PATIENTS YET, JARGE ?"

Jarge : "DUNNO—BUT 'E ASKED ME TO SHARPEN 'IS SAW TO-DAY !"

Yes—fine. Jane wanted a fur; and when Jane wanted a thing there was no peace until she got it. One of these days she would go to one of the swell shops, even though they couldn't afford it, and he would have to go without a suit, or something, while she was robbed; whereas, if he got a fur for her cheap, all the pleasure and prestige of being the giver direct... No! There was a catch somewhere. He grew suspicious and resentful again.

The stranger sighed.

"Dat's the vorst of goot tings—you can't afford 'em," said he.

Duncan was ruffled.

"What's the use of it to me?" he said, with a show of indifference. "I

might—well—I don't mind giving you five pounds for it, and chance the risk."

"Vat?"

The man snatched the fur from Duncan's knee, and caressed it.

"Sell you, my tear, for five pound! Vy—bring tears into your glass eyes."

Duncan protested.

"Here, wait a minute."

"No, no. I don't sell you, my tear. I put you away in your bag."

"Oh, well," said Duncan, finding a little strategy in his turn, "it makes no difference. I dare say I should do better with the money."

The stranger sighed with exasperating sympathy.

"Vat it is to be poor!"



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

Dear Old Soul : "ACTORS MUST BE VERY DELICATE PEOPLE, MARJORY."

Marjory : "REALLY! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THAT?"

Dear Old Soul : "I SEE THEIR NAMES ATTACHED TO SO MANY PATENT MEDICINE ADVERTISEMENTS."

"Oh, I can easily pay it if I want to," said Duncan, stung to rebellion. He grabbed his wallet. "One, two—yes, five, here you are. I'll bet you can't resist the sight of money. And you'll be getting a handsome profit out of it, I dare say."

The fur had disappeared in its bag. The money trembled in Duncan's hand. He wanted the fur. Time after time during the last month Jane had talked about a fur wrap, and he had stood with her at shop windows, trying to drag her away. A mere nothing for five pounds—just a strip of skin and hair. This must be a bargain. He need not tell Jane what it cost; or, better still, he could tell her six pounds, ten, fifteen.

No—not fifteen. She would think him too rich, hiding money from her. Anyway, he must have the fur first. Unfortunately the man seemed to be very reluctant to take the money. Duncan grabbed the bag with the fur. Still the man hesitated. He didn't seem to want money at all. He refastened his package, pulling the strap tight. The train began to slow down. A station appeared.

"Vell, vell," said he, taking the notes, and stuffing them in his pocket, "I take your money, and give it to charity. It is not business; it is philanthropy. Dat is de vord, yes."

He opened the door and disappeared. Several people entered the compartment, talking loudly. Duncan clutched his



Drawn by Bowes.

Short-sighted Mother (misunderstanding father's frantic efforts to save himself): "COME ALONG, CHILDREN. FATHER'S BECKONING US. HE MUST HAVE FOUND A SAFE PLACE TO CROSS."

parcel, and looked forward with impatient glee to the end of the journey. He wanted to open the bag and stroke the fur.

"How's Aunt Alison?" demanded Jane anxiously, as soon as he entered the house.

"Rats to Aunt Alison!" he retorted, startling her. "I've had a slice of luck. I've been buying something."

She was indignant.

"You know very well we are short of money this week. You told me to buy something cheap. I've got chilled pork. It goes a long way."

He chuckled. Then, in their parlour, looking round first as though to make sure the furniture could be trusted not

to tell tales, he opened the bag, and placed the fur gallantly about Jane's shoulders.

"But—but—" she cried, almost aghast, "it's magnificent! They cost—oh, you haven't spent the Bible Class money, have you?"

"Pooh! That's all right," he assured her. "I can easily pay it back. It won't be wanted for a month, at least."

"The whole ten pounds?"

He nodded. And then he realised, at first with horror, and then with satisfaction, that he had committed himself to that suggestion. Jane thought he had paid ten pounds for it. The flattery was irresistible. It was worth ten pounds, of course—more. He would

have had to pay more, no doubt, if he had not been so clever at bargaining. Sheer cleverness! He glowed with pride.

"You darling!" cried Jane.

She kissed him rapturously, and together they danced round the parlour.

"I shall wear it to-morrow, for Sunday Meeting," she declared. "I hope they won't think it too swell and we're trying to show off."

The bell rang. The caller was Mrs. McTaggart, come to see Jane about the Ladies' Sewing Circle. Mr. McTaggart was an ironmonger's traveller and prosperous. Jane always made a great fuss of Mrs. McTaggart when she came. Naturally, therefore, she had to show her the fur.

"Good life!" said Mrs. McTaggart to Duncan, in admiration, "you've had to pay twenty pounds for this, I'll guarantee. Lucky man to have a rich aunt."

Duncan nodded as modestly as he could.

"It wasn't his aunt," said Jane indignantly, for she felt that the comment robbed them of their own proper pride. "Was it, Duncan?"

"No," said he. "The fact is, I got it as a special bargain."

"Let me know when you can get another," said Mrs. McTaggart.

When she had gone they danced round the room again. Jane declared that she had never been happier. They had a crab for supper, to celebrate the occasion. During the night, when they were awake with indigestion, Jane had a series of ideas as brilliant as the stars from a rocket. The fur was so very fine that it would make her old costume look dreadful. She must have a new costume—grey, perhaps, to match the fur. That, of course, would make her hat shabby; besides, it was the wrong colour. She would need a new hat.

Grey stockings wouldn't cost much. Fortunately, shoes were not so dear as they used to be. And there would be the gloves. Her handbag was brown; it was not a very good one. She would be obliged to have another, or it would look odd. Duncan's indigestion grew worse and worse.

On Sunday, therefore, Jane tried on the fur several times before the wardrobe mirror, and then put it away before going to Meeting.

"You'll be keeping your fur till you've got everything to match?" suggested Mrs. McTaggart.

"Yes," said Jane.

That settled the matter. Duncan had no presentable argument left.

"You see, my dear," said Jane, "people expect it."

Duncan's thoughts were so violent that they deranged his bodily mechanism. Jane blamed the pork. She herself had a cold, but was much too happy to heed it.

Unfortunately her cold developed seriously and on Tuesday she had influenza. On the following Sunday she had not yet gone out and nothing was ordered. The waiting worried her. Duncan bought a couple of Sunday papers for her and went to Meeting alone. He was worried. He would have to cash some of his precious Savings Certificates to meet expenses.

When he returned Jane rushed to him at the door.

"Look, look, look!" she cried breathlessly, holding out the newspaper. "What shall we do?"

Duncan looked, and trembled, and looked at Jane. Then in a panic he shot the bolt across the door. A man had been arrested for stealing furs: prominent nose, beard, foreign accent...

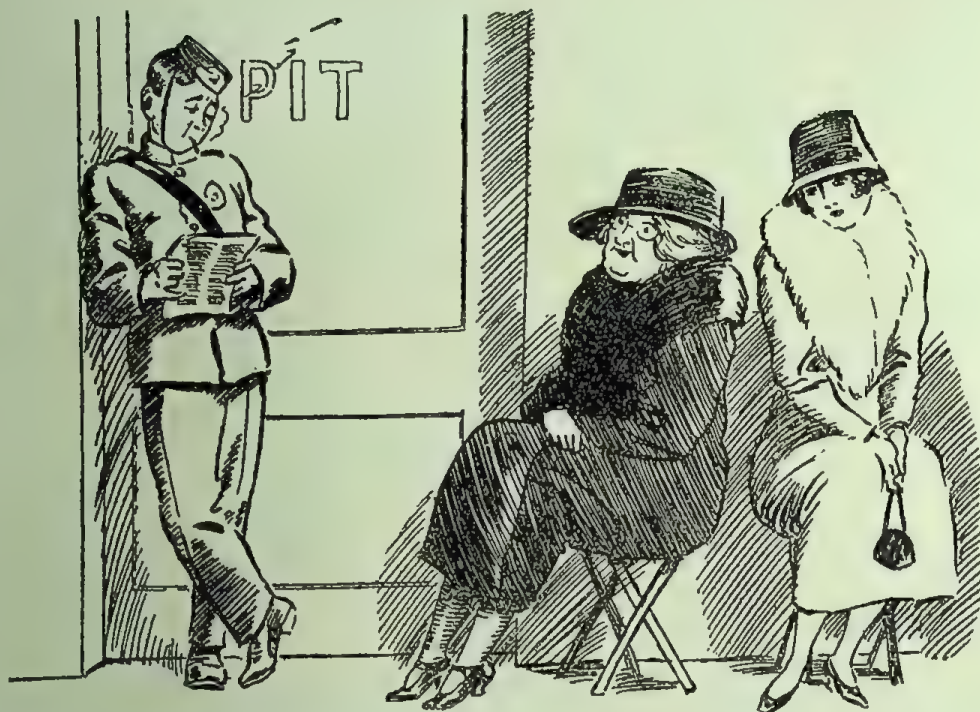
"How did I know?" said Duncan helplessly.



Peter Fraser /

Drawn by Peter Fraser.

Solitary Spectator : " NAH, THEN, THERE ! GIT RID OF IT ! NOT SO MUCH O' THAT PLAYIN' T' THE CROWD ! "



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

Kind Lady in the Queue: "YOU MUST GET AWFULLY TIRED WAITING THERE SO MANY HOURS."
Blasé Messenger Boy: "OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, MUM. I DON'T HAVE TO SEE THE SHOW."

"You ought to have guessed," said Jane.

"You didn't!" he retorted, gathering his rage. "Why should I? It was a bargain. I paid a fair price. I bought it. I paid good money for it. What better right has anybody to it? It's mine, ours, yours. Besides"—he lowered his voice—"nobody knows."

"Suppose it was recognised?"

They went together like stage burglars and stole the fur out of the wardrobe. Not a name, not a sign anywhere to recognise it by. He went back to Sunday Meeting resolutely; but his voice was feeble in the hymns. Every sound behind him startled him. When he arrived home Jane greeted him with

the solemn news: "I've hidden it under the bed." Later, when the bell rang, she would not go to the door. He dared not. A knocking followed. They clung to each other and waited, trembling. When at last he went, there was nobody there.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, I tell you," said Duncan, when he returned. "I don't care who comes. I'm an honest, Christian man."

Still they were not easy in their minds. Jane didn't want her costume. She was momentarily glad she had influenza and could not go out.

Duncan rose reluctantly on Monday morning and went to work. Never before had he seen so many policemen.



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Shopman (showing a case of cutlery to prospective purchaser): "I suppose you'd like it 'HALL-MARKED,' SIR?"

Wealthy Gentleman: "We would, THAT—EVERY BLESSED BIT OF IT. . . . Now, what d'you say, M'RLA—SHALL WE 'AVE YOUR NAME CARVED ON 'EM OR MINE?"

His fellow-workers made coarse jokes about whisky, he was so nervous. The typists' furs, even the big dogs, reminded him of the fox's skin. He was so miserable—it rained all day—on purpose, he declared.

Jane was at the window awaiting his return. She smiled. So they hadn't come yet! Thank Heaven!

"Mrs. McTaggart has been," she announced. "She wanted to see the fur. I told her we had sold it and you were getting me another. Wasn't it clever of me? She asked me if you could get one like it for her. So I said, 'Yes, perhaps.' And I said twelve guineas, because guineas sound better

than pounds, and I didn't like to ask less for fear she would think it wasn't a good one. You only gave ten pounds, didn't you, dear?"

"When is she coming back?" asked Duncan eagerly.

"To-night. I said you might perhaps bring it. I didn't want to tell a lie, so I said everything with perhaps. And I thought—perhaps—you would buy me another."

Jane giggled, and looked coy. Duncan lifted her nearly off her feet and swung her round in ecstasy. They danced until they were out of breath. And when Mrs. McTaggart had come, and gone with the fur, they danced again.



Drawn by J. C. B. Knight.

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

"OLD JOCK'S A PRETTY LITTLE PLAYER."

"AYE. BUT LOOK 'OW 'E'S BEEN STARVED ALL THE SEASON!"

But later, when they had said their prayers together, cosy in bed, Jane began to be troubled.

"Do you think it's quite honest?" she asked; and she was not to be reassured by mere asseveration. "I think at least we ought to show our thankfulness by giving some of the money to the collection next Sunday."

Duncan agreed sleepily. A moment's calculation, however, woke him completely. When Jane suggested half the money he nearly jumped out of bed. He began to explain and only remembered the exact facts just in time. Jane's conscience refused to go to sleep.

"Good heavens!" he protested. "If we put pounds into the plate on Sunday,

people will ask questions. They'll think we're going to kill Aunt Alison, or rob her. Besides, they'll expect the same the next Sunday. They might think we had done something already, and it was conscience money."

Jane was alarmed. They talked for two hours. When at last they pretended to sleep they had agreed to give ten shillings each. While they lay awake before rising they talked again. Ten shillings each in notes would certainly set the congregation gossiping. No! It wouldn't do. They might give silver—in instalments, perhaps. But what then? Generous gifts in silver for a month, and then coppers? That wouldn't do either.



Drawn by Arthur Morland.

"Hi, 'ORACE, COME ON! THERE'S A BLOKE IN MORRIS'S WAITIN' WHILE HIS SUIT'S PRESSED!"

"Shall we give what we have over?" suggested Jane.

"Half," said Duncan reluctantly.

Jane went to town, and bought her costume. It cost more than she intended to give. Duncan dared not grumble. It was delivered, and he duly admired it. So Jane bought her fur. They were awfully dear in the shops. Stockings, shoes, hat, gloves, bag, followed, and Jane wept at Duncan's remonstrances. In a rage he bought a new hat for himself, and a new overcoat, lest Jane should make him look too shabby.

Sunday came round, and they were ready to go to Meeting. Neither had dared to mention their secret worries. Jane's conscience gave one more twinge.

"Do you think——?" she ventured very timidly.

"Good heavens, no!" declared Duncan, anticipating all her thought. "We decided to give the surplus, didn't we? Well, the boot's on the other foot." He chuckled. "We ought to take what's in the plate."

"You wouldn't dare?" cried Jane, horrified.

He laughed at her.

"It wouldn't be enough," said he.

They laughed to console themselves.

"If you hadn't gone to see your Aunt Alison——" said Jane.

"I haven't counted the railway fare wasted," said Duncan.

So they blamed Aunt Alison, and put in the plate twopence each as usual.

NATURE STUDIES

THE RT. HON. ARTHUR AUGUSTUS WILLIAM HARRY PONSONBY, P.C., M.P.,
UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Fifty-three years ago, at royal Windsor,
Arthur Ponsonby joined the aristocracy
By accident of birth.
At the age of eleven, he had the distinction
Of being appointed Page of Honour to Queen Victoria,
Afterwards following the usual routine of his class,
Passing from Eton to Oxford,
And thence into the Diplomatic Service.
His Liberal sympathies in these early days
Led to his appointment to the coveted post
Of Principal Private Secretary to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman,
The then Prime Minister, and later won him election
As Liberal Member of Parliament for Stirling Burghs,
Which he represented until nineteen-eighteen.
He did not re-enter Parliament until nineteen-twenty-two,
When he was returned for the Brightside Division of Sheffield,
Which he still represents.
At the beginning of the present year,
When Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was feverishly looking round
For men of sufficiently advanced views
To join his Labour Cabinet,
He roped in the blue-blooded Ponsonby
And made him Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,
In which Office he gained considerable notoriety
By his unique explanation of the Anglo-Russian Treaty,
And especially of the Russian Loan,
Which he wanted the House to guarantee,
Although obliged to admit
That he didn't know the amount of it
Or very much else about it.
From which it can only be concluded
That, if his knowledge on other matters
Is no greater than his knowledge on the Russian negotiations
(Which he was presumably put forward by the Government to explain
Because of his intimate connection with them),
Then the measure of his general ignorance
Is the length of the illimitable plumb-line
Which would be necessary to take soundings
In the bowels of a bottomless pit.

"ATOM"



G. Bissill

Drawn by G. Bissill.

THE RT. HON. ARTHUR AUGUSTUS WILLIAM HARRY PONSONBY, P.C., M.P.

TO-MORROW'S DAWN

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

IF there is anything serious about this story I hope—as my old friend Swatty Schwartz used to say—to choke. And yet there may be. I'm not particularly keen-minded, and the seriousness may escape me. All I can see in it is farce.

At half-past seven, the dessert having been just a little hurried, the four pushed back their chairs and left the dining-room. Mr. Blane, having looked down at his white shirt front to make sure no spot had appeared there during dinner, went into the hall. He pushed the button that warned Thomas to bring the limousine to the door and then proceeded to put on his overshoes because patent-leather shoes always made his feet cold. His feet were warm now, but the seats in the theatre might be where a draught would blow across his feet and make them cold during the performance. In that case he wished to have his overshoes to put his feet into when he got into the car.

Thomas, who would put the car in a garage and go to the pictures during the play, understood that he was to place Mr. Blane's overshoes on or near a radiator in the garage in order that they might be warm inside when Mr. Blane came out of the theatre. If the radiator was too hot, Thomas was not to put the overshoes on top of the radiator but near it. Thomas understood all this. Mr. Blane had explained it to him many times most minutely.

In putting on his overshoes Mr. Blane stood. In the hall there were several chairs and a handsome oak bench on which Mr. Blane might have sat, but he was a short and too plump little man, with a bald head—which last, of course,

has nothing to do with his standing while he put on his overshoes—and he had decided that his overshoes were most easily put on when he stood. In putting them on he put one hand against the white woodwork of the stairs, stood on one leg, crossed one foot across one knee and pulled the overshoe over his patent-leather with his free hand. Then he turned round, put the other hand against the white woodwork of the stairs and put on the other overshoe in exactly the same manner.

Mr. Blane did not buckle the overshoes. His dress trousers were always beautifully pressed and buckling the overshoes might have harmed the crease at the ankle. This because he put the lower extremities of his trouser legs inside the overshoes. He held—and had often said—that if you put the trouser-end outside the overshoe, you leave a space between the trouser leg and the overshoe up which cold air may come, striking the calf just above the ankle. The sharp contrast of cold on the calf just above the warm foot and ankle and just below the warm rest of Mr. Blane—or anyone—is the surest way to create a chill, leading to a cold, to rheumatism, perhaps to influenza, to pneumonia and to death! So Mr. Blane put the cuffs of his trouser legs inside his overshoes.

In putting on his overshoes, being the height he was, Mr. Blane stood always in exactly the same spot in the hall. For this he had a reason. If he stood a foot nearer the door his hand would not come against the white woodwork of the stairway but against the banisters—a most uncomfortable place. If he stood a foot farther the other way his



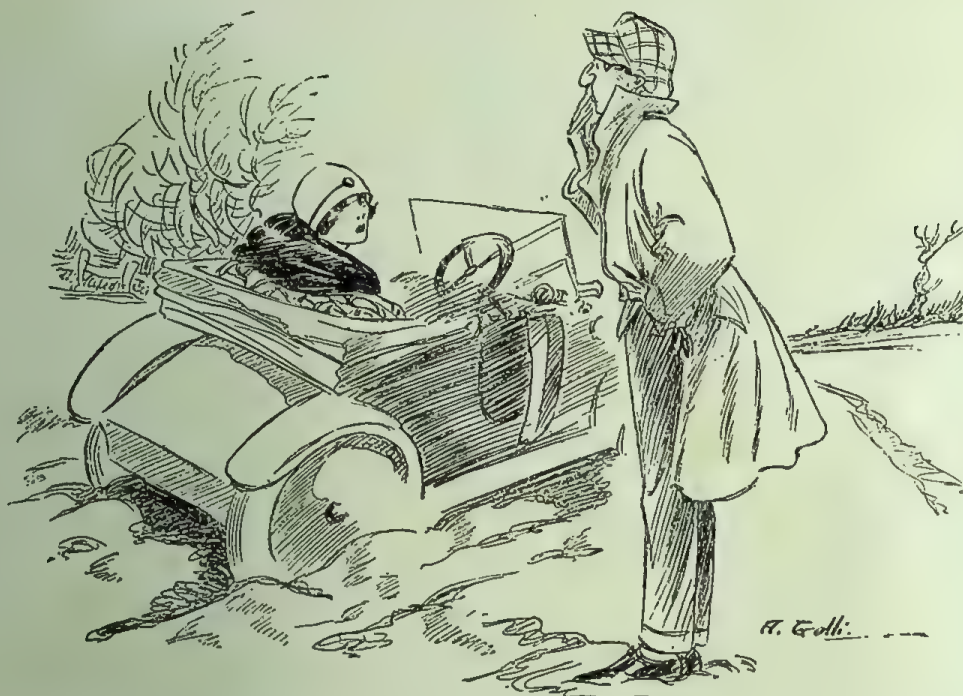
Drawn by Mendota.

THE EVIDENCE.

Hubby: "THERE! I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT WELSH RAREBIT AT DINNER-TIME."

Wife: "WHY, WHAT'S THE MATTER?"

Hubby: "NOTHING—ONLY THIS PIECE OF CHEESE WAS IN THE SOAP DISH."



Drawn by A. Gelli.

She (angrily): "I SUPPOSE IT'S MY OWN FAULT FOR COMING WITH YOU. I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE AN OLD STICK-IN-THE-MUD."

hand would come against the wall-paper under the woodwork of the stairs and, if his hand happened to be gently perspiring—as a healthy normal palm should—it would make a spot on the wall-paper. Mr. Blane, for that reason, always stood in one spot in the hall, and Mrs. Blane always saw to it that the handsome chest, containing the family goloshes, was on exactly the same spot so that Mr. Blane could reach his goloshes or his overshoes without moving from the spot on which he stood to put them on.

Once or twice, after putting on his goloshes or his overshoes, Mr. Blane had found traces of dust on the hand

that first rested on the hand-rest spot on the woodwork of the stairs, but this was not likely to happen again. The maids always wiped that spot carefully now, whether they wiped the rest of the woodwork carefully or not. Mrs. Blane, in passing through the hall, always put her hand on the spot and then looked at her hand. If you take all these facts in conjunction with Mr. Blane's pink-soaped immaculateness of skin, his silken muffler, his wonderfully fitting garments and the three small bottles of pills he carried in his vest pocket, you will understand Mr. Blane.

Mrs. Blane, upon leaving the dinner-table, had hurried upstairs. This was



Drawn by Nicholson.

Patient (recovering from accident to his hand): "AND ARE YOU SURE, DOCTOR, I SHALL BE ABLE TO PLAY TH' PLANNER WHEN ME 'AND GETS WELL?"

Doctor: "CERTAINLY! OF COURSE, OF COURSE."

Patient: "OH, THEN THAT'S ORLRIGHT. I WEREN'T EVER ABLE TO PLAY THE THING BEFORE!"

a rite. It was also a precaution. Immediately after eating too much—as he always did—Mr. Blane had an inclination to sudden and unrelated anger. If Mrs. Blane was then present he spoiled her whole evening—the words are her words—by a few brief but bitter expressions. He might tell her that the house was hot enough to roast a Fiji and that she ought to have more sense, or he might tell her it was cold enough to freeze a Siberian and that she ought to have more sense, or he might tell her he wished everybody would leave his overshoes where he put them and she ought to have more sense. In a few

minutes, after the two pills from bottle Number Three began to do their duty, Mr. Blane would calm down. So Mrs. Blane always went upstairs as soon as she arose from dinner-table. When they dined out she retired to the ladies' room and powdered her nose.

In Mrs. Blane, Civilization, who had been working toward perfection for thousands of years, had at last created it. You may imagine Civilization, in a white peplum or something, standing with admiration while she gazed lovingly upon Mrs. Blane.

"At last!" Civilization was probably saying to Barbarism and Eternity, her

sisters, "At last I have done what I have been trying to do all these years. My triumph is complete!"

To an innocent bystander, one of the crowd attracted by the sight of Civilization, Barbarism and Eternity standing in peplums or something, like wax figures in a lingerie shop, Eternity might say:

"What's happening, you ask? Just this! My sister, Civilization, has struggled and wept and fought and battled for thousands of years to create a new world and a new race and, lo! here is the culmination of all her efforts. Behold Mrs. Blane."

Of Mrs. Blane, the fine product of civilizing influences, our allegorical Civilization may well have been proud. She wore clothes unlike those of a cave-dweller, ate food more diversified than that of any female of the stone age, did her hair otherwise than the ladies of the iron age, wore stays more intricate than were dreamed of in the copper age and had a mind somewhat better than a grandmother in her dotage.

It was Mrs. Blane's boast that she was a member of eighteen societies and clubs. She attended lectures insistently and what she heard there rippled her mind as a puff of breath might ripple a dinner-plateful of water. She saw nearly every play produced and read innumerable 'new' novels, nearly each of which was, for a moment, 'epoch-making, monumental, illuminative' or something else important, but nearly all of which depended on some sort of sex nastiness for its popularity and all of which would be forgotten in fifteen years or classed with *The Duchess*, Ouida's works and other trash.

On all important matters Mrs. Blane was 'safe.' She attended church regularly, voted, upheld law, order, disarmament, a reducing diet, preservation

of wild flowers and nearly everything else. She spoke kindly but firmly to her maids and they knew she was speaking firmly but were not so sure about the kindly. Her house was an equal triumph of Twentieth Century civilization. It was 'well ordered.' It looked, indeed, as if no one had ever really lived in it or was ever meant to really live in it. And I doubt if anyone was meant to. Much of the time of Mrs. Blane and her maids was spent in keeping the house looking like a set of specimen rooms in a furniture shop and unlike a home used by a family. Mrs. Blane was, indeed, as smug as a bug in a rug, or smuggler. So Mrs. Blane left the dining-room and went upstairs. The story is progressing rapidly, as you can see.

Iris, on leaving the dining-room, crossed the hall and entered the drawing-room, which was not the living-room, and Ned followed her at a distance varying from two feet to two-and-one-half feet. As they neared the drawing-room door, which was hung with drapery, he put his hand on her arm and, as the drapery closed behind them, he took her in his arms and kissed her. Mr. Blane, in the hall, heard the almost noiseless kiss and did not mind. He had expected it because he had heard other kisses of the same sort since Iris and Ned had become engaged. Mrs. Blane, upstairs, did not hear the kiss but she had no doubt it was being kissed.

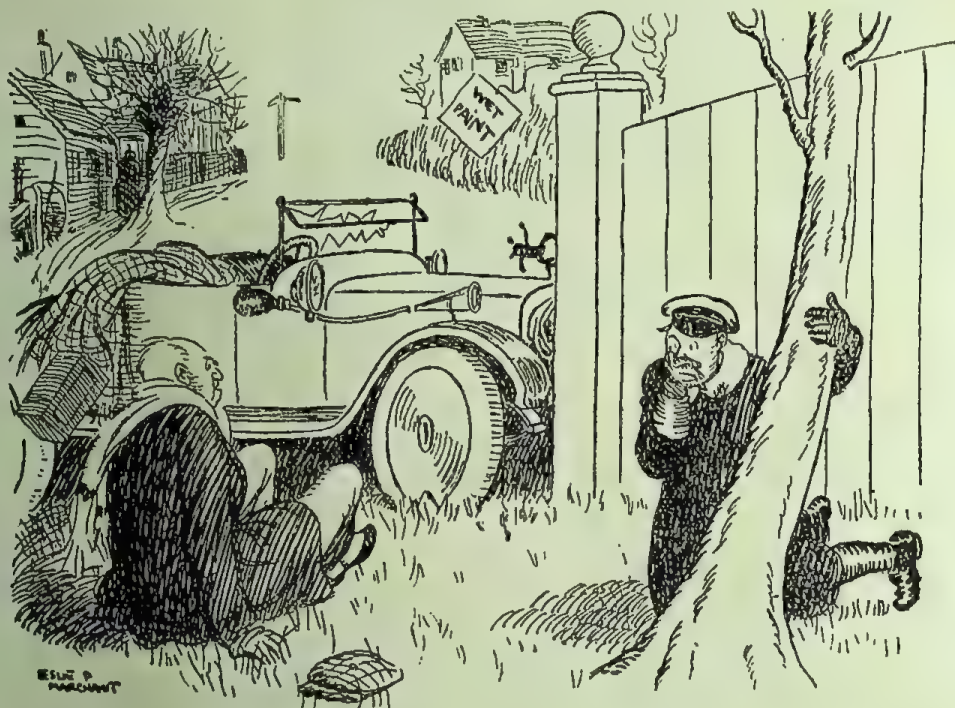
The Iris-Ned after-dinner kiss, when it was a pre-theatre or ante-dance kiss, was handled in a manner to do credit to both young people. It was managed in a manner that ensured the greatest amount of satisfaction possible when combined with the smallest amount of mussing of Iris's hair, complexion and gown. In the several months during which they had been engaged, they had



Drawn by Frank Whitburn.

Constable : "NOW, THEN ! WHAT'S THE GAME ?"

Convivial One : "THATSH AW RI', OFFISHER ! JUST TAKIN' THE OLE BOY'S PLACE WHILE HE HASH A LI'L DRINK !"



Drawn by Leslie P. Marchant.

Irate Owner of Car: "COULDN'T YOU SEE THAT NOTICE—IDIOT!"

brought the non-mussing kiss to almost absolute perfection and to the lowest point of audibility. This had been due almost entirely to Iris's gradually given instruction.

Having been kissed, Iris bustled into the hall, followed by Ned, who tried to appear innocent, and took up her opera cloak. As she held it towards Ned, she called up the stairs:

"Hurry, mother, or we will be late!"

Mother never did hurry and mother never was late, but Iris always admonished her while Mr. Blane was putting on his overshoes. It made it unnecessary for Mr. Blane to shout gruffly up the stairs as he always did when Iris was not there.

Ned held the opera cloak and Iris

backed into it and he folded it round her, gently touching her bare shoulder as he did so and getting a pleasant thrill. Touching her shoulder there in the hall, with Mr. Blane so near and Mrs. Blane at the top of the stairs, still had something illicit in essence and was delightful. Sometimes Iris, being touched thus, leaned an elbow back against him for a moment, showing him that she understood. All this was romance and love and youth and everything nice and as it should be.

The play, it seemed, was *To-morrow's Dawn*, and an excellent play it was, with a remarkable cast. Iris, to be frank, was rather indifferent to most plays—she had seen so many—when Ned was sitting beside her, but she watched this



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

The Visitor: "I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE GARDEN?"

The Amateur (modestly): "I DON'T."

The Visitor: "REALLY! JUDGING BY APPEARANCES, I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU HAD IT AT YOUR FINGER-TIPS."

one breathlessly. More than once she forgot to keep her foot pressed against Ned's foot, compelling him to slide his patent-leather round her seat to find comfort, and as the play proceeded she quite frankly withdrew her foot. She even withdrew her arm. She quite leaned away from Ned and towards her mother.

"What's the matter?" Ned whispered. "You're not angry or anything, are you, dearest?"

"No! Don't talk; I want to listen," Iris whispered.

Ned was hurt. This was, indeed, downright cruelty. He stared moodily at the stage and went over his entire

life mentally, seeking to discover what had thus turned Iris against him. She had once told him he smoked too many cigarettes, he remembered, but she had seemed satisfied with his explanation that he did not smoke as many as she thought. Of course, if that was it, he could cut down. Or give up smoking. Or perhaps he had pushed her foot too hard. Perhaps he had hurt her dear little foot! He agonized over this. He leaned toward her.

"Did I hurt your foot?" he whispered.

"No! Please don't talk. I want to listen," Iris whispered and he imagined it was a vicious whisper.

The awful thought came to him that perhaps Iris had a corn! Perhaps he had scrunched her poor, dear corn with the cruel sole of his shoe! He glanced at her and her face did seem drawn. Well, not exactly drawn, perhaps, but she did not look at him when he looked at her. She looked at the stage and the actors. She looked at them as if she were *interested* in them.

He did not think of Iris's corn as a malformation of her dear, sweet, little foot. He pitied. He suffered with her. He admired her. How noble she was. For weeks, perhaps, she had been suffering every time he pushed his foot against her foot. For weeks, perhaps, she had borne pain because she loved him and did not want to hurt his feelings by telling him he was hurting her foot when he was trying to show he loved her by—

He glanced at Iris again. She was looking straight at the young *Ansel Callups* of the play. A cold chill of fear followed by a hot flush of jealousy passed over Ned. What if Iris had fallen in love with that fellow! What if it was a case of love at first sight and it became an infatuation—one of those infatuations that grasp a woman with a crushing blow, dragging her from home, from parents, from husband—if she has one—and causing her to forget all that is noble and true and right—

He would shoot the fellow. Kill him, yes! But first a test!

"He's rotten, isn't he?" Ned whispered.

"Yes, but I do wish you would not talk; I want to listen," Iris whispered.

He looked at her with appealing eyes. Dog-like is the term often used. She leaned towards him.

"Because, if you can't let me listen, I'll make mother change seats with me," Iris whispered.

At any rate, he would not have to murder that *Ansel Callups* fellow, and that was something. It would be messy to have a murder on one's conscience, and that aside from the difficulty of discovering where the fellow lived and hunting him up and shooting him in neat, gentlemanly way.

But why had she grown cold to him? What had he done? What had he left undone? Again he searched his past. He searched his future. Was it because he was not yet a billionaire and it might be several years before he was one? Suddenly an awful thought came to him. He was vaguely conscious of a bare arm on the arm of his seat on the side away from Iris—a woman's arm. Did Iris think he had, perhaps, pressed his arm against that woman's arm? Did she think he had been flirting with that woman? Had she suddenly decided that he was a Lothario? He turned cautiously and glanced at the woman with the bare arm. She was sixty if a day! She looked like a barkeeper's grandmother.

Despondently Ned sank deep in his chair. It was a hideous mystery. It was something he could not fathom. It will be understood what his state of mind must have been when it is told that he actually read every advertisement in his programme. It was the first time anyone had read all the advertisements since programmes were first instituted. In a spirit of utter hopelessness Ned began to watch the play.

He did not get much from the play. He thought, on the whole, it was a silly lot of senseless talk. This was in part due to the fact that he had not heard much of the first two Acts and in part to the other fact that he continued to think of Iris. He was glad when the silly thing ended.

On the way home Iris was talkative—



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

Fireman : " COME ON, MA'AM ! HURRY UP ! "

Placid Old Soul : " I CAN'T COME FOR A MOMENT, FIREMAN. I'M AFRAID THESE TWO AREN'T A PAIR ! "



Drawn by Seymour Hurley.

"EXCUSE ME, M'M, BUT YOU'VE LEFT THE TELEPHONE RUNNING!"

too talkative. It was forced gaiety, a burst of protective camouflage words, hiding deeper things. Instinctively Ned knew there would come a moment—probably just as Iris stepped from the limousine—when the darling of his heart would whisper a few words, revealing her real thoughts. Everything, he felt glumly, pointed that way. He knew girls!

"Listen, Ned," Iris did indeed whisper as the car stopped at the Blane door, "I want you to come in. You must! I can't live through the night unless I can talk to you."

He knew it! He had felt this coming. His love-life had been too delicious, too beautiful. Such beatitude cannot last.

He followed Iris to the house and

inside. There were a few minutes of mock normalcy—beautiful, beautiful word, so descriptive of Mr. and Mrs. Blane in their home!—and then the parents of Iris left them. Ned trembled slightly. He gazed at Iris's profile as she stood with one foot on the fender and in his eyes was the waiting wistfulness of a faithful hound expecting execution. Until she heard a door close above-stairs Iris did not move. Then her action was surprising to Ned. With a swift turn of her body she flew to him and wrapped her arms round his neck.

"Oh, Neddie, I love you—love you—love you so!" she cried, and she kissed him quite enormously. He could not remember that she had ever kissed him



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

She: "DID YOU KNOW THAT SYBIL HAS A DARK ROOM ON PURPOSE FOR PROPOSALS?"
He: "I DID! I DEVELOPED A NEGATIVE THERE MYSELF LAST NIGHT!"

quite so violently as this. He felt fine—for a moment or two he certainly did feel all right. He felt relieved and happy and blessed.

"I know, darling," he said tenderly.

"But you don't understand—you cannot understand how I love you, Neddie, darling!" she insisted. "You're more than life to me. You're everything I have; you're my life and my soul and everything—just everything! I can't bear to lose you—I can't—can't—can't bear it."

"Don't you worry about that," he laughed. And at that moment it did not appear likely that she would lose him, but surface indications are deceptive; there are deeper currents, if we know

where to look for them. Iris put her hands on his shoulders and looked at his dear face long and lovingly, but she shook her head sadly.

"No, I cannot bear to lose you, Neddie," she said. "So—we must part!"

"But, I say, Iris," he cried. "That's nonsense!" Suddenly he seemed to see the light. "If you mean I'd better go home now—get a move on before your father comes down and throws me out—"

"Oh, don't be so frivolous!" Iris exclaimed.

"You don't mean it's all off—that our engagement is broken? You don't mean part for ever, Iris?" he pleaded.

"No, no! Not for ever, Neddie!" she assured him. "For a while—for a few years! So that we may be together always."

"But that's rot, you know," he said. "That's all foolish talk. I don't know what's the matter with you, Iris. In a couple of months or so we'll be married——"

"No; that's just it! In a couple of months or so we must not be married," Iris said. "That's the danger. That's what I see now—the awful danger we have been facing, not knowing it was there, Neddie. Listen, please!"

She drew him to the couch and spoke earnestly.

"I've been feeling it, Neddie—feeling something was wrong—but until to-night I was not sure. Now I am sure. It was so true, that play—*To-morrow's Dawn*—that I know we must not marry now if we are to be happy together for years and years."

"Oh, but I say!"

"No! Don't interrupt me. It is all clear to me, Neddie, dearest. I have read books and books, and I have seen plays and plays, and I understand better than you understand. Do you want to lose me for ever, Neddie?"

"Good Lord, no!"

"Then we must part, Neddie. We must part now. You don't understand yet but you will in a minute. You don't like the idea, Neddie, and neither do I, but it is the only way we can do if we want to be happy together all our lives. Or unhappy together. If we want to be together all our lives, anyway. Did you watch the play to-night? Did you listen to all the wonderful, truthful things that were said?"

"No, I thought you were angry with me——"

"It was so wonderful—so clear and deep and true!" exclaimed Iris, clasping

her hands. "It explained so clearly that one *can't* be satisfied with her husband. Not the one she married in the first place. Never with that one. Not even if she loves him most dearly, Neddie. The Other Man always comes, and she struggles with herself and tries to be staunch and true and noble, but she can't. Fate is too much for her—Fate or Destiny or something. She *always* pins a note to the pincushion and goes away with the Other Man, casting just one sad look back as she leaves the home she had loved so well. Neddie——"

"What?" he asked gloomily.

"I just can't bear to think of a few brief months of love with you and then a parting for ever!"

"But that's all rot!" Ned exclaimed. "You've got that all wrong. I've seen thousands of pictures and it is not that way at all. She—the wife, you know—does cut loose sometimes, Iris, but she always comes back and is forgiven. That's the way it happens, Iris. It's pretty hard for the husband while she's gone, but they're happier than ever when she comes back. I've seen thousands of pictures——"

"Pictures!" she exclaimed scornfully. "Of course, in the pictures she comes back! Trash, written to pass the censors, Neddie. But not in books and plays! Not in deep studies of real life by men who have lived long and deep and who *know*, Neddie. No; it is always the same—and I can't bear it."

She was tremendously in earnest, he could see that.

"I don't know what we can do, then," he said hopelessly.

"There's only one thing we can do, Neddie, dear," she said, taking his hand and smoothing it gently. "It is hard, but I have thought it over and it is the



Drawn by Frank Whitburn.

He (teaching her to drive): "THERE'S A VERY DANGEROUS CURVE JUST AHEAD!"

She (looking nervously in front): "GOOD GRACIOUS, YES! PERHAPS YOU HAD BETTER TAKE THE WHEEL UNTIL WE GET PAST HER!"

only way. If we want to have each other for years and years, you must be the Other Man."

"The *what*?" Ned asked.

"The Other Man," explained Iris, patiently. "You must be the Other Man, the one I fall in love with after I am married, and elope with. That will make it all right, you see. We can fool Fate that way, Neddie. Instead of marrying you and having some Other Man come and make me fall in love with him and carry me away from you, I will marry someone and then you will come and I'll love you and run away with you. Then my husband will

divorce me, and you and I will be married, and we can be safe and happy all the rest of our lives."

Ned drew his hand away. He sat back and stared at her.

"You mean you want to marry some other fellow first?" he asked. His face was white.

"I don't *want* to," said Iris, and the tears gathered in her eyes. "I mean I *have* to. It's our only way."

"Who'll you marry?"

Her head bent under the fierceness of his voice and the tears dropped on her hands.

"I—I don't know," she faltered, "I

haven't thought, yet. There—there are quite a number I—I might take. There's Roger Notley."

"Look here! You don't try that with me!" Ned cried with boiling anger. "If you want to marry Roger Notley, go and marry him. If that's what you want, I've finished! I've seen you looking at him——"

"Ned, you've never! That's the meanest, wickedest, unkindest sort of falsehood! I don't care a snap of my fingers for Roger Notley and I never did and I never will——"

"You're going to marry him. You said yourself you wanted to marry him, not a minute ago——"

"I did not! I said——"

"Marry him, then! But don't think I'm going to play second fiddle to any of your Rogers."

Iris was weeping now.

"You're unkind! You're unkind!" she moaned.

"I'm nothing of the sort. I love you and I want you and I want to marry you, and you know it. I'm *not* going to pick up the leavings of any Roger Notley——"

"Oh, I'm leavings, am I?" cried Iris, rising in tearful anger. "I think that is just a little too much, even from you. *Leavings!*"

"I did *not* say you were leavings!"

"You did! You certainly did!"

"Iris! I said that if you married Roger Notley——"

"That has nothing to do with it whatever. I know what you said. If you think——"

"If I think! I'll tell you what I think—I think that if you are going to marry me, you've got to marry me. You can make up your mind here and now! I'm not going to be second fiddle——"

"Oh! Oh!" Iris wailed. "I knew it—you don't love me any more!"

"I do."

"You don't! You don't! If you did you wouldn't *want* to marry me first and then to have some Other Man——"

"My heavens!" cried Ned.

He threw himself across the room and into an easy chair and hid his face in his hands. Suddenly Iris ceased to weep and stared at him with eyes of horror. Her emotion was so great she paled.

"Ned!" she whispered. "Ned! I understand! I see! I have been blind—— I have been—— Who is she, Ned?"

"She? Who? What do you mean 'she'?" he asked, uncovering his face and looking up.

"The girl," Iris said bitterly.

"What girl?"

"What girl! Please don't try to be innocent. I can stand a great deal, Ned, but not that—not that! Not from you, Ned!"

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"You know as well as I do, what I mean," said Iris coldly. "Please do not think I am entirely a fool. I can see everything quite plainly now—quite plainly. And it was clever, very clever. She was to be the Other Woman!"

"My stars! What Other Woman?"

"The Other Woman who is to elope with you after you are married to me. No doubt you planned it well, Ned. No doubt you and she chose me to be the poor fool of a wife from whom you could run away so that you and she might live happily ever after——"

There was utterable sadness and disillusionment in her voice. None, however, in Ned's when he leaped from his chair.

"My stars in heaven!" he shouted. "What are you trying to do—drive me crazy?"

"Then why do you want to marry me first——?"



The Home Centre—



secured the ball—



dribbled round—



the opposing half—



steadied himself—



*and scored with a hard drive
just under the bar.*

Drawn by A. Gelli.

THE POWER OF THE PRESS.



Drawn by Wal Lane.

Phyllis (who has just travelled by Underground): "OH, LOOK, MUMMY! THERE'S A MAN COMING THE WRONG WAY OUT!"

"I don't. I did, but I'll be hanged if I want——"

"That's enough! I knew from the first——"

"You never did care a hang for me! You've been looking for a chance to get rid of me——"

"That's not so! If you loved me at all——"

"It is so! And if you cared a pin for me——"

All mixed up. You can't tell which was saying which, probably, but that was how it sounded. In a minute or two Iris was weeping to such an extent that her words sounded like nothing but sobs and Ned's voice was so close to tears and so mixed with anger that he merely spluttered. She threw herself face downward on the couch in an

agony of unhappiness and Ned strode up and down the room.

"This settles it!" he declared. "I've finished!"

She did not answer. He strode into the hall and kicked one of Mr. Blane's overshoes fourteen feet. He had intended grasping his hat and coat and rushing from the house for ever, but the overshoe did not skitter harmlessly along the floor. Given motion by his foot, it rose like a well-kicked football and travelled through the air. It hit one of the panes of frosted glass in the door at the rear of the hall and went right through. There was a clatter of glass.

Iris was at his side in an instant. She grasped his arm and leaned against him.

"What was it, Ned?" she asked.



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Lady (to uncouth individual who persists in smoking a vile cigar): "I ONLY WISH MY HUSBAND WERE HERE."

Uncouth Individual: "WHY, WHAT'S 'E—A PRIZE FIGHTER?"

Lady: "No—A SANITARY INSPECTOR!"

"I kicked one of your father's overshoes through that window!" he whispered, frightened.

Iris giggled.

"Sh!" she warned.

They stood in motionless silence.

"Iris," came from above, "isn't it almost time for Ned to go home?"

"Yes, mother, he's just going," she answered, and taking Ned's hand she tip-toed into the drawing-room again.

"You'll have to go now," she said. "It must be frightfully late. Do you love me, Ned?"

"Do I?" he ejaculated.

"You'll come to-morrow night?" she whispered and reluctantly disentangled his arms.

"Of course, darling!"

She closed the front door softly when he went out and then extinguished the drawing-room lights. She gathered up her gloves, her opera cloak and her bag in a business-like manner and went upstairs. In her pretty head was no thought of first husbands or of Other Men or of Other Women or any such nonsense. The one thing she thought as she climbed the stairs was that she wished she had gone to the kitchen for a bite or two, but that now she had better wait until morning.

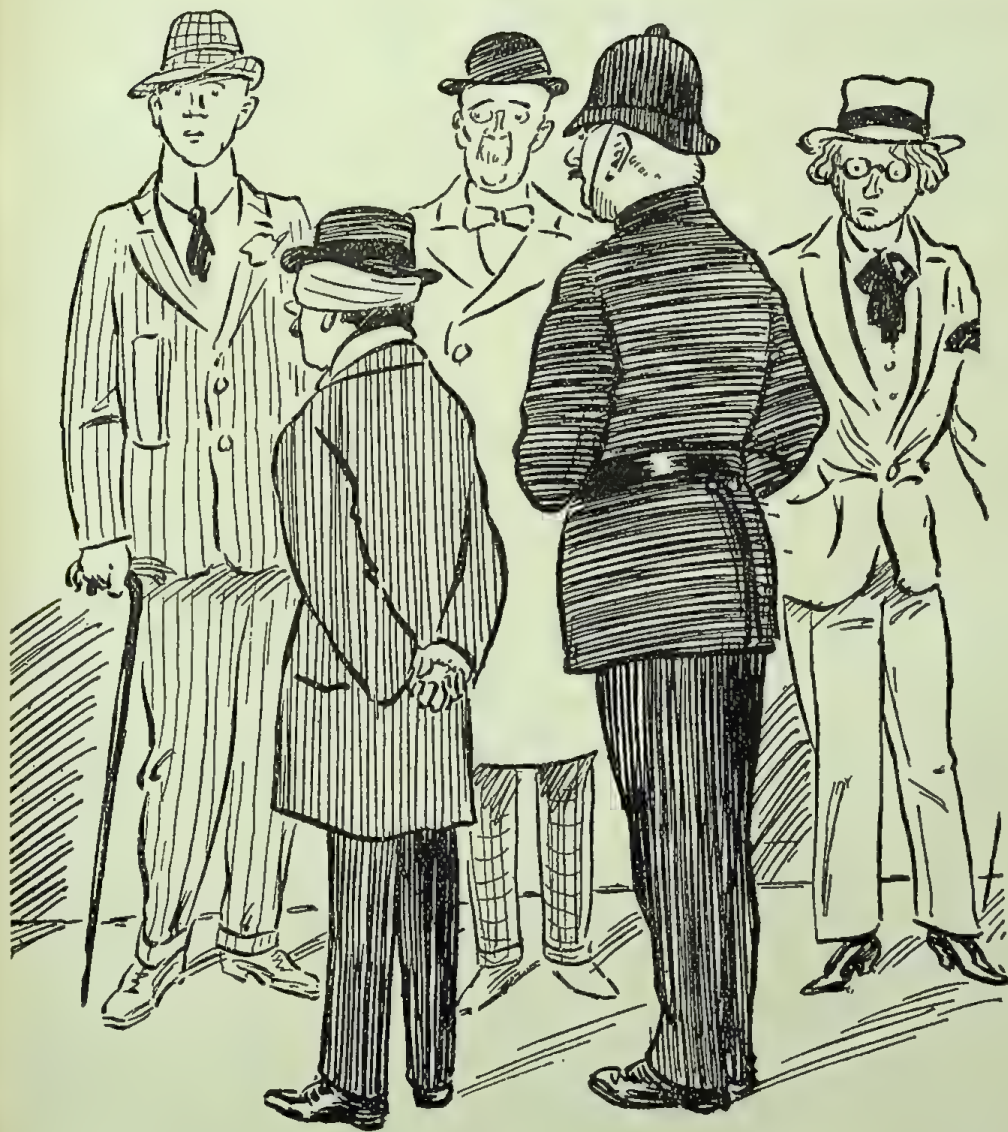
Ned, turning towards home, was not worried in the least. He did not exactly understand Iris, but he was glad of it. He had had a spiffing time. So had Iris.



EDWIN
TODD

Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

THE IDENTIFICATION PARADE—



WHICH IS THE MISCREANT?

CONCERNING RAMSI, THE RULER OF EN

1 *There is discontent in the land of En.* 5 *Ramsi promiseth to succour the people.* 12 *And is appointed Ruler over all the land.* 13 *He chooseth his officers.* 14 *And speaketh unto the people again.* 18 *The people are perplexed.* 20 *They question Ramsi.* 23 *Weet Le replieth for him.* 26 *The people question Ramsi again.* 29 *Ramsi telleth them of the things that he hath done.* 32 *The people are amazed.*

NOW there was great discontent in the land of En, and the people complained continually *because* of their tribulations, which were manifold.

2 And they lifted up their voices on high and they cried unto the rulers in a loud voice, saying, When now will ye give us work for our hands *to do* that we may receive the wages of our hire and buy bread for the mouths of our children?

3 For there was a great dearth of work in the land so that *many* lived perforce in idleness and penury.

4 Moreover, all the people were crowded *together* in their habitations, for there were not enough houses in the land for to shelter all *of them* in comfort.

5 ¶ And it came to pass, after that the people had cried out for a long time, that a certain man stood up *before* them and he spake unto them in these words, saying,

6 Behold in me, Ramsi, a man of wisdom and one that getteth *on* with the doing.

7 And I have heard your groaning and your lamentations, and the sharpness of your tribulations *has* pierced unto my heart.

8 Wherefore I say unto you, Appoint me to be leader over you that I may remove the burden that weigheth *down* heavily upon your shoulders and bring laughter to your lips that now are drawn tight in anguish.

9 And I will give work unto all them that seek it, that they may receive the hire of their labour; and unto every man in the land I will give an habitation, unto *every* man a house.

10 And when the people heard Ramsi, what he said, they marvelled amongst themselves and they spake, the one unto the other, and they said, What manner of man is this? Is he a prophet come down to perform miracles that he speaketh *in* this way? And they wondered at him greatly.

11 But there were some that believed he was the devil come thither to deceive the people *with* specious words. And these would have none of him.

12 ¶ Nevertheless, because these were not so strong *as* those, therefore was Ramsi set up for to rule over the land. And all the people waited for the coming to pass of those *things* concerning which he had spoken unto them.

13 ¶ And so Ramsi sate upon the high seat in the House of the Rulers. And he called *certain* of his followers unto him and he appointed them, each to his *own* task, for to be his officers.

14 ¶ And after that he had appointed them, he went out before the people again, and he spake unto them in these words, saying, Did I not promise you that I would give you labour that ye might earn the wages *of* your hire?

15 And did I not promise you that I would build habitations so that unto



Drawn by Geo. S. Dizon.

Slavey (breathlessly) : "MA'AM, THERE'S A MAN BIN A-FOLLOWERIN' OF ME."

Mistress : "OH, INDEED !"

Slavey : "YES, MA'AM. I KNOW HE WAS A-FOLLOWERIN' OF ME BECAUSE HE KEP' ON TURNIN' ROUND TO SEE IF I WAS COMIN'."

each man amongst you there should be an house for to shelter him ? And the people made answer and they said, Thou didst.

16 And Ramsi said, Hearken then and pay attention, for I am not one of them that has to do with idleness nor am I a laggard in doing whatsoever I set my hand unto.

17 Therefore I have appointed certain officers for to do all those things whereof I did formerly speak. Yea, though naught be done as yet, nevertheless the time will surely come when that which shall be, shall be.

18 ¶ And when the people heard him, what he said, they were sore perplexed.

And they spake, the one unto the other, and they said, Is this *then* the worker of miracles that erstwhile was before us ? (for they began to suspect him as a man whose tongue alone was quick within him).

19 Nevertheless, they possessed their souls in patience, thinking peradventure that in a little time more Ramsi would do all those things that he had promised to do, so that all would be well with the land.

20 ¶ But after they had waited many moons and the burden of their tribulations was become no lighter than before, then they sent word unto Ramsi and



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

Housewife: "A POUND-AND-A-HALF OF BUTTER, A POT OF MARMALADE, EIGHTEEN EGGS, THREE-QUARTERS OF BACON, HALF-A-POUND OF CHEDDAR, A ONE-AND-TUPPENY TIN OF APRICOTS AND THREE-AND-A-HALF POUNDS OF LOIN OF PORK. NOW, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN CARRY ALL THAT IN YOUR HEAD?"

they said unto him, What about it? Where now *are* the houses that thou didst promise us?

21 And Ramsi said unto the messenger that brought him word, Peace be upon thine head and upon the heads of all thine house, let *there be* peace also. And I will send one of my officers unto the people that he *may* speak unto them and ease their troubled minds.

22 And he sent one Weet Le, *being* the officer that he had appointed for to build the houses, and he commanded Weet Le that he should tell them all *about it*.

23 ¶And when Weet Le was come before the people, he said unto them, How now? And the people answered

him and they said, Where, then, are the houses which Ramsi did promise for *to build* for us, being one house unto each man in the land?

24 And when Weet Le heard the people, what they said, he waxed very wroth. And he said unto them, What thinkest thou I am? A conjuror that produceth houses *like* rabbits from a hat?

25 And he lashed the people with his tongue and he poured *out* the vials of his indignation upon them, scorning them utterly *because* of their question, that they did ask it.

26 ¶And when Weet Le was gone from amongst them, the people sent again unto Ramsi and they said unto



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

The New Lady of the Manor (showing Vicar round): "AND THIS BEAUTIFUL QUEEN ANNE CABINET WAS GIVEN TO ONE OF MY HUSBAND'S ANCESTORS BY HENRY THE EIGHTH."

him, Now that we do know about the houses which thou didst promise unto us, tell us now a little concerning the work which thou didst promise unto us also.

27 And when Ramsi heard the messenger of the people, *what* he said, he was amazed at the ingratitude of the populace and his soul was moved with pity for himself.

28 And he cried out in a loud voice and he said, Have ye no eyes that ye cannot see? And are ye men of so little understanding that ye know not all the things that I have done?

29 ¶And he told them of the things that he had done. And he told them about the fuel that was coming from the land of the Huns for to make less work for the miners of En.

30 And he spake unto them also concerning the many talents of gold that he was lending unto the men of Russ, a thieving lot that owed much gold already.

31 And he said unto the people, These things have I done for you and more also. Why, therefore, do ye upbraid me that am a man of wisdom and one that getteth on with the doing?

32 ¶And all the people were amazed and they knew not what to say, for never before had such an one ruled over the land of En. For Ramsi was a wondrous doer of deeds, and whatsoever he did promise for to do, that thing he peradventure did, or (also peradventure) he did not.

"ARTEMAS."

THE CUSHION

By ROBERT MAGILL

IN spite of the appalling shortage of young men, there are still girls who wait to be asked. This may be due to maidenly modesty or, on the other hand, it may be due to something more subtle. If the girl has to grab the man and hold him down while she says "Yes," she yields up one of her principal weapons in the forthcoming fray. She can never throw it up at the wretch afterwards that if he hadn't proposed to her she might still have been happy and single.

Patricia Blent, spinster, although her handicap was thirty-five and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, was like that. She felt that she would die rather than demean herself in this way. Yet in other respects she was up-to-date. She smoked, danced the Blues, and appreciated free verse. Her flat was always decorated with the latest smart kick-shaws—feline Felixes, bulging Bonzos and cuddly dolls. Her latest addition to this menagerie was a huge cushion of the most recent style—in the shape of a Pierrot seated on the floor. You may have seen them in the drapers' shops.

The man who passively resisted capture by Patricia was named James Boulger. He belonged to the same Browning Society and the same Nature Study class. He was not exactly the type of man who makes film actors lose any sleep, being short and fat, but Patricia forgave him all that because she always saw him through the rose-coloured spectacles of love instead of through her own horn-rimmed pair, which she wore because she was so short-sighted.

The only trouble with George was that, compared with him, a slug would be considered an ardent lover.

One night he had arranged to call for Patricia to take her to a fancy dress ball and, after toying with the idea that he might go either as Romeo or Monsieur Beaucaire, he had a brilliant idea. He would go in an absolutely unique costume. He would go as a Pierrot! He didn't know, poor man, that seven hundred out of the thousand men who were going were also going as pierrots, but no matter.

On this particular evening, Patricia, being a woman in spite of her horn-rimmed spectacles, wasn't ready in time, so George went into the drawing-room to wait for her. After a while he sat on the hearthrug, clasping his knees, and gazed into the fire, thinking of Patricia. She was a long time, and George dozed.

At length she came down, dressed as Minerva, to put her shoes on by the drawing-room fire. Minerva doesn't wear glasses, so Patricia had left hers off, and she didn't notice George. She guessed that he was waiting in the hall, and she sat down on her favourite pierrot cushion to put her shoes on.

Immediately the cushion woke up and, to prevent itself falling over backwards, grabbed her round the waist. It was George.

"Oh, George!" she said. "Oh, George!"

It was all she could think of for the moment. But it was enough.

"Patricia," said George, "I feel that I have compromised you. I am a man of honour. Will you marry me?"

There is a moral in this story. It is this: There are more ways of catching a mouse than by lassoing him. You can sit on him.



Drawn by Peter Fraser.

Police Constable (taking particulars of motor accident): "YOU SAY YOU WERE A WITNESS OF THE COLLISION. WELL, WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHICH CAR HIT THE OTHER FIRST?"

THE LOVE BRIGAND

By J. A. E. KITCHEN

AS the author of this play, *The Love Brigand*, which may be produced within the next few months at the Old Theatre, I want to make my peace with the world and if, in doing so, I smash the reputation of Mr. A. Mapton Henry (described by one of the critics a short time back as 'the flower of the English stage'), I am sorry, but I shall be easier in my conscience.

Now, in the first place, I never called my play *The Love Brigand* at all; it was originally entitled *The Truth About Henry Wheeler*, and had an entirely original theme which was suggested to me by reading a recent serial in one of our most widely circulated newspapers. A friend of mine (a man, I may say, of international repute) to whom I showed the manuscript advised me to approach an actor-manager who could put the thing on 'as it deserved' and, considering the matter further, I finally decided that A. Mapton Henry—still flushed as he was with the triumph of his *John Joshua* in *Soul Bandits*—was the man to approach. As a matter of fact, that very morning I had seen, in the illustrated press, a photograph of the gentleman in question feeding ducks, with the caption: 'A. Mapton Henry, after his prolonged success in *Soul Bandits*, is resting at his country house in Kent.'

I accordingly went round to the *Bodega* in Bedford Street and found him in one of his best moods—bluff and hearty—eating prawns on toast. There is no false pride about the truly great, and Mr. A. Mapton Henry had no hesitation in allowing me to buy him several drinks and a fresh consignment of the

succulent prawn before he explained that we could not properly discuss business there, but that he would put my manuscript in his side pocket and read it in due course. On that we exchanged cards.

"Then possibly I shall hear from you?" I said, as I prepared to go.

"Nothing surer," he replied with hearty sincerity. "I'll write you to-morrow without fail."

I have put this down in order to show that I approached the man in absolute good faith, believing implicitly in his histrionic power and his love for the drama, and remembering the words of Z. Z. in the *Comet* to the effect that:

One feels that Mr. A. Mapton Henry is one of the few British actor-managers who are prepared to sacrifice much for the advancement of the stage in this country. . . .

All this took place last January.

In the early part of this month, I received, in response to my eighth letter of enquiry, addressed care of the *Old* and marked 'please forward,' a missive bearing an address in Hammersmith. It read:

Dear Sir,

I have read your play and rather like it, but I find that it requires certain alteration which I can explain to you personally. It is promising stuff and a play I should like to put on, but the period and characters in the play are rather a crab. Call to-morrow about twelve and we can discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

A. Mapton Henry.

Needless to say, I felt that here was a chance of my getting before the public with a drama of real power and, at twelve o'clock precisely, I was shown



Drawn by Morgan Rendle.

Old Lady (after listening to pitiable tale) : "AND HAVE YOU GOT A WIFE ?"
Beggar : "NO, MUM. I'M ENTIRELY SELF-SUPPORTIN'."



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

THIRTEEN GUESTS HAVING ARRIVED TO TWELVE COVERS, OUR RESOURCEFUL HOST RESORTS TO 'MUSICAL CHAIRS' IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE ODD MAN OUT.

into his rooms where he was seated in his dressing-gown eating bacon and eggs, and drinking coffee.

"Oh, yes," he said, "about your play—what do you call it? You know, there's a lot of good stuff in it—quite a lot of good stuff. The only drawback is that I never play those modern parts—Henry Wheeler would never suit me. Won't you sit down?"

"That's unfortunate," I said. "I rather thought from the tone of your letter that you liked it."

He held a piece of bacon suspended on his fork while he laughed.

"So I do, my boy, so I do. But, as I say, what I don't like about it is the period and the people."

"It involves what is essentially a modern problem," I pointed out.

"You have Henry Wheeler, with his wife a hopeless lunatic, tempted by Kate Clinsdale who has passionately declared her love for him. If he reciprocates, he may, by her great influence, realise his highest ambition. What is he to do? Should a man realise the best he is capable of in his profession and sacrifice his finer feelings, or should he live, and possibly die, a failure, because of our modern conventions?"

Mr. A. Mapton Henry had left the table and was brushing his hair before a swing mirror.

"That's all right," he said brightly. "Good idea that! And it's easy to knock it into shape. I think we can make it O.K. I'll read you what I have roughed out."



Drawn by Doves.

Greatly Incensed Wife (making a praiseworthy attempt to disguise her feelings before guests): "DON'T YOU THINK, DARLING, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF YOU'D TAKEN MY ADVICE AND BOOKED SEATS IN ADVANCE?—you idiot!"

He found his rough draft in the collar box, and sat down.

"Now your First Scene—John Wheeler's drawing-room in his house at Hampstead. I've had to do away with that, and the play now opens in a state-room on board a big Atlantic liner. Also, in your version of the play, I don't come on until the second Act and, as I'm jolly well paying for the flipping show, it's no good. Next item, why on earth have you made Wheeler a married man?—I couldn't get the hang of that at all. He might just as well be a handsome bachelor. I always do those parts. Kate Clinsdale will stand all right as she is, but I've made her a rich, American gal. That gives an opening for some comedy

stuff. In one place, for instance, she might say: 'I guess to die in your arms, honey boy, would be a first class Pullman to heaven, with a luncheon basket all the way.' All that sort of thing, you know. I should get roars of laughter from it."

"Mr. Henry," I said, "this play is not a comedy."

"But you must *have* comedy, my boy. Now, where was I? Oh, yes! Well, the liner is wrecked and for a moment I weaken. I confess, in the face of death, that I love this woman—'In the shadow of Death's scythe, Love has flowered in my heart!'—and then, curtain, quick."

You will notice, I hope, that I was



Drawn by A. R. Cane.

"KISS GRANDPA, LIKE A GOOD BOY. AND THEN YOU'D BETTER ASK NURSE TO WASH YOU!"

not unreasonable with Mr. A. Mapton Henry. I argued with him calmly and I persisted in keeping before him that the story was essentially a tragedy of modern life. I also told him that he had a reputation to keep up, not only as a lover of the drama, but also as one of its most prominent supporters.

"Well, what am I doing now?" he said. "I'm putting the thing into shape. You come to me with an article to sell. I say, 'All right, I'll buy it if I can make certain alterations.'"

I suggested then that he called the play his own, but that he indignantly refused.

"I don't do *that* sort of thing, my boy. That would not be fair to you. But let us get on a bit. We are cast up on a Hawaiian island. Now this is where your theme comes in. The Ha-

waiian Queen is beautiful—a beauteous, dusky maiden with a wreath of lotus flowers in her hair. Isn't that better than laying Act Three in the Board Room of the Durando Company? Of course it is. Now how am I fixed? Shall I forget my self-respect and accept the love of this dusky Queen or remember those words at the curtain of Act One? There's your problem, set just the same as you had it, only in better surroundings. Besides, my face is a bit lined, you know, and I need to put on plenty of make-up. I can don the rig-out of a pirate of the Spanish Main. Easily got over, if I say to Kate: 'My own clothes are drying. Miomi'—that's the Queen—'has lent me some garments cast up by the sea and treasured here for years.'"



ALFRED H. TAYLOR

Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Mother : "HOW MUCH WAS YOUR ORANGE, BETTY ?"

Betty : "I DON'T KNOW, MOTHER. THE SHOPMAN WASN'T THERE !"



Drawn by Wal Law.

"AWFULLY SORRY, SIR. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE A FRIEND OF OURS."

"I don't know, Mr. Henry," I objected. "I hardly like it. I don't want to oppose a man of your standing, but I feel that it is not a bit like my idea at all."

"Don't be silly, laddie," he said. "I was young myself once. This will be O.K.—Hawaiian music, straw skirts, dances, beat of the tom-toms and a big, silver moon across the blue lagoon. Hang it, man, it's poetry, that's what it is, poetry. Don't you see your name written big on the sky signs?"

I have regretted my weakness ever since, especially when the publicity agent for Mr. A. Mapton Henry showed me a paragraph he was about to send out to the papers. Here it is:

ACTOR-MANAGER'S DARING VENTURE

A. MAPTON HENRY DISCOVERS NEW AUTHOR

Another instance of the remarkable enthusiasm of Mr. A. Mapton Henry, the famous actor-manager, for the future of the British drama is revealed in his discovery of a new playwright, the author of his coming production *The Love Brigand*. Entirely unknown, the author in question was practically destitute in New York, his play having been rejected by every manager on Broadway. While sitting dejectedly in Central Park, with the manuscript on the seat beside him, he was seen by Mr. Henry who happened to notice the title on the front page of the manuscript. A few words,



Drawn by Lance Mattinson.

Much-married, Festive Gent: "I WAN' A BOTTLE OF YOUR STRONGEST BRILLIANTINE, PLEASE, MISS—FOR THE BREATH."

and the bewildered aspirant to fame was rushed off to Mr. Henry's suite at the Plaza, where the play was read and contracts almost immediately prepared. . .

I warn the British public seriously about *The Love Brigand*, once called *The Truth About Henry Wheeler*. It is entirely the same play as *The Soul Bandit*—not to mention *The Love Snatcher*, *Cupid's Outlaw*, *The Heart Sneak*, *A Burglar in Roses*, *Stolen Hearts*, *Purloined Love*—all plays which have had that impostor Henry in the first act, the second act, and the third.

I know exactly what is going to happen. If, by any strange fluke of fate, the thing is a success, it will be, 'another tribute to the discriminating

ability of one of the flowers of the British stage.' If, on the other hand, it is a failure, it will be due to the 'daring venture, the great-heartedness of one of the few British actor-managers who are prepared to sacrifice. . .'

He admits his face is lined, and I hope it lines more and more until he looks like a walking railway junction. He is getting corpulent; I hope he grows double the size of Falstaff. The next time he goes into the *Bodega*, I hope the first prawn will choke him, so that the Press may have the satisfaction of announcing the death of a great actor-manager at 'his country house in Kent.'

But before that happens, I also hope he will send me a cheque.



Drawn by Rowes.

THE FEMINE POINT OF VIEW.

Fair Spectator (to companion at Rugby match): "WHAT A DELIGHTFUL EFFECT THOSE WHIRLING COLOURS GIVE, DON'T THEY, DEAR?"

THE CHILD OF THE STRANGER

BY MANNING CAMPBELL

I JUMPED into a carriage as the train moved out from the platform, and the other passengers grudgingly gave me a seat. Having had no time to buy a paper, I was reduced to studying my fellow travellers, and my attention was caught by a child at the other end of the carriage. He was a boy of about five, unhealthy fat, with a pallid, jam-smearred face, and long, yellow curls. He leant against the window, clouding

it with his breath and licking it clear again.

Next to him sat a tired-looking woman—his mother obviously. She was engrossed in *Home Notes* and took no notice of the child, who presently stood up on the seat and began to jump about, flinging himself down with a shout and scrambling up again. Several times he fell on top of the woman, but instead of telling him to be quiet she would shake him off impatiently and go on reading.

By this time his noise had disturbed everyone in the carriage. In the corner seat next to me a stout, elderly woman, ample-breasted and a heavy breather,



Drawn by Geo. Davey.

"HALLO, JONES! YOU LOOK BLUE. WHAT'S WRONG?"

"I AM BLUE. I GOT A COMMISSION FROM A PORK BUTCHER TO DO A POSTER ADVERTISING HIS FAMOUS SAUSAGES."

"WELL, WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?"

"HE GAVE ME A SET TO WORK FROM AND—I'M STUCK. I'VE EATEN THE MODEL!"

was staring at him over her lowered paper. I turned to her indignantly.

"Isn't it amazing," I said, "that his mother can't control him? Is she never going to teach him any consideration for others? Look at him now!"

He had pulled down an umbrella from the rack, and was waving it dangerously. Suddenly it crashed on to an old gentleman in the opposite seat. The old man glared furiously at him, but the instinct of self-preservation warned him not to slap a stranger's child.

I turned again to my neighbour.

"What that child wants," I said with conviction, "is a whipping."

She bridled, and her red face flushed redder.

"Look 'ere——" she began, when suddenly the child himself lurched across the carriage to her knee.

"Ma," he whined, "gimme another jam puff."

With a defiant glance at me, she handed him a bagful.

He left her sobbing on the quay
And swore eternal constancuay,
Vowing, by every star on high,
His love for her would never digh.
She whispered, 'Dear, I'll wait for thuay.'
But did he come back? No, not huay!

VERONICA GOES BY CAR

BY RALPH WOTHERSPOON

I SHALL not easily forget the day Veronica and I drove to Rattlebury in our 10 h.p. Ditchling-Beacon. This was what happened. Rattlebury being only about twenty miles away, we had arranged to motor over for lunch. We were to meet Aunt Imogen and Cousin Douglas at one o'clock in the lounge of the *Lion Hotel*. Not that we wanted to. It was a case of duty. Veronica came down to breakfast full of life. Personally I dislike heartiness at this meal.

"You'll love the *Lion*," she said. "It's an old coaching inn."

"How do you know that?" I inquired.

"Oh, I went there the other day—with Peter."

Peter is a link—a weak one—in Veronica's chain of young men.

"Did you? Why?"

"Why not? It's a perfectly respectable place. Aunt Imogen wouldn't be likely to go there if it wasn't, would she? I tell you it's an old coaching inn—sort of Pickwick affair."

I left the topic.

"Is there a garage?" I said.

"Of course there is, open day and night. I mean," she added hastily, "the garage belongs to the hotel. It's sort of part of it. You drive in through a funny, little, narrow, squiggly passage."

I fixed my niece with a stern, penetrating gaze. She met it unblushingly and had the audacity to wink at me.

"Go and get ready," I said.

"Yes, Uncle," she replied and floated gracefully from the room.

She is a nice child but I shall be glad when the holidays are over.

I went into the garage to see the Ditchling-Beacon. There it was, a canary-coloured two-seater—the type of car often contemptuously referred to as a 'yellow beetle.' According to its manufacturers it was a one-man car but I had never really been the one man for it. We had not had it long. When it first came to us, or, rather, when we 'took delivery' of it, it arrived in charge of a technical expert.

"It wants running in," he said gloomily.

With that he went silently away. I have always suspected that he cut short his remarks seeing from my face that technicalities would be wasted on me. With regard to the 'running in' problem, Veronica and I decided that a trip to Rattlebury could not fail to accomplish something of the kind. We were right.

"Ready," said Veronica, bursting into the garage complete in jazz scarf, Burberry and close-fitting hat. "Come on. Buck up."

"Get in," I said, "and be quiet."

"Got any petrol?"

"Yes."

"Got any oil?"

"Yes."

"Got any water?"

"Yes."

"Got——"

"Don't talk so much," I interrupted, applying myself to the starting handle.

A couple of minutes hard cranking produced no definite result.

"She's cold," I explained.

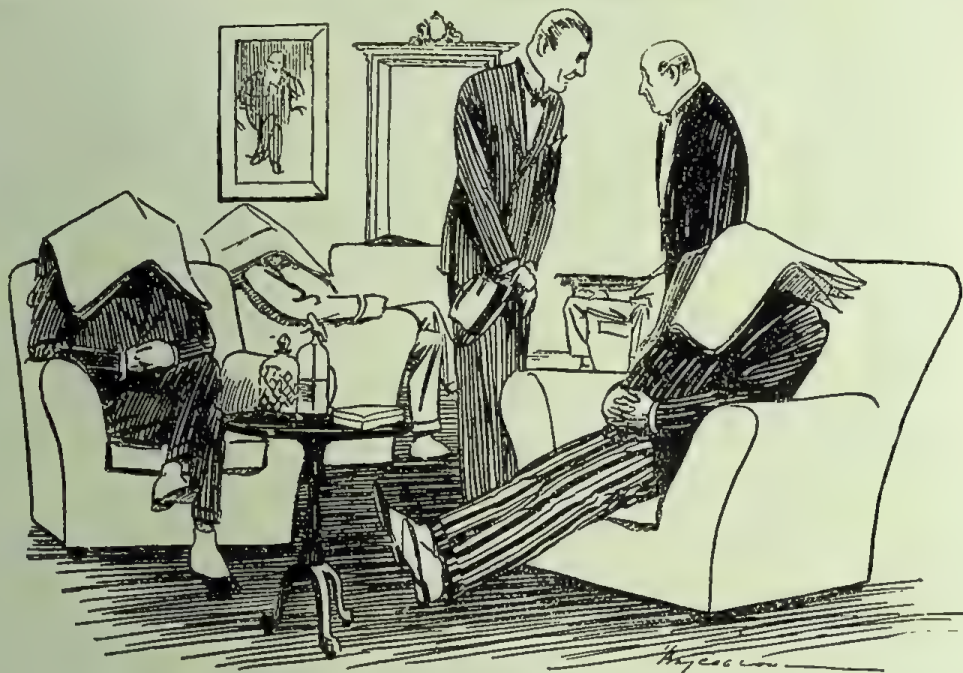
"So am I," said Veronica. "Shall you be long?"

Thoughtfully I turned on the petrol



Drawn by A. E. Bestall.

Ultra-nervous Young Man (who has just been accepted): "B-BUT, I SAY—TH-TH-THIS IS SO SUDDEN!"



Drawn by A. E. Batchelor.

Visitor: "WAITER! WHERE SHALL I FIND MR. KNAPP?"

Club Waiter: "MR. KNAPP, SIR? LET ME SEE—MAJOR JAMES, THE *Times*; *Telegraph*, MR. BOWSER; *Mail*, MR. ELLIS AND—YOU'LL FIND MR. KNAPP UNDER THE *Morning Post*, SIR."

and flooded the carburetter. The engine came reluctantly to life and I took my seat at the wheel.

"Right away," I announced, and we crawled out of the garage.

"Hi," said Veronica. "You've got the hand-brake on, silly."

We crept cautiously down the drive and into the main road. There I struggled into top gear and we settled down to enjoy the journey. I drove with great care.

"I've always wanted to drive," declared Veronica presently.

"So I've noticed," I agreed, "in every car you've ever been in."

"Let me drive," she pleaded. "I can, you know. Peter taught me."

After a good deal of argument, I con-

sented to let her try her hand for a little while and we accordingly changed places. Veronica lost no time. The Ditchling-Beacon suddenly found itself streaking down the road at about forty miles an hour.

"Stop, please," I requested my niece.

"Don't talk to the girl at the wheel," she answered.

It transpired afterwards that Veronica had been in the habit of driving Peter Graham's racing Handley-Paget but, at the time, I did not know this.

We proceeded at a nerve-racking speed for some miles. I could see that Veronica knew enough about a car not to hit the hedge but what she would do if she were to meet anything coming in



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

"WHICH IS THE ROAD TO BUMBLECOMBE?"

"JUST FOLLOW YOUR NOSE, SIR. YOU'LL FIND IT A STIFF CLIMB ALL THE WAY."

the opposite direction I shuddered to contemplate.

"Stop at once—AT ONCE," I shouted angrily.

"Can't," said my niece sweetly. "Too risky at this pace. Sorry."

We continued to go like the wind. Suddenly, from behind a hedge, an idiotic hen rushed out and flew blindly under our front wheels. Veronica swerved, but too late to avoid a catastrophe. Death was instantaneous—the hen's I mean. In the excitement of the moment the electric horn somehow went on and stayed on, and the countryside resounded with its shrill roar. Veronica stopped the car. We looked back. A corpse was plainly visible.

"Shall we have it for lunch?" she shrieked above the din of the horn.

A shabby man popped up from nowhere and addressed us. It was not *his* hen, he explained. Then what the deuce did he want? It appeared he wanted to know the time. I could have murdered him. We obliged him with the time and he hung around, doubtless expecting largesse. A little shaken, I resumed my seat at the wheel. The hen incident was, however, not Veronica's fault, except that, had she been going more slowly, the hen might have had time to alter its course. The horn, thank Heaven, now subsided and we made ready to continue. At this



Drawn by A. Gelli.

The Vacuous Idiot : "SO I GAVE HIM A PIECE OF MY MIND."

The Bored Beauty : "THE LAST PIECE, I SUPPOSE?"

junction an entirely unexpected policeman on a motor-bicycle chugged up behind us, got off and produced his infernal note book.

"I've been after *you*," he informed me. "Dangerous driving. I've got the number all right. Dangerous driving, that's wot. Licence, please."

"That's right," agreed the shabby man. "I see 'em. Wallop they come and then the pore bird cops it in the neck."

"Hold your tongue," I said coldly, feeling vainly for the licence.

"I was going to ask you if you'd got it when we were in the garage," murmured Veronica, "but you told me to shut up."

I communicated to the policeman the sad fact that the licence had inadvertently been left at home. He took my name and address and promised me that we should hear further. He then departed with a final heavy caution on the subject of exceeding the speed limit. I think we were lucky to get rid of him.

"You're for it," said the shabby man. "Twenty pun', I shouldn't wonder. And serve you bloomin' well right."

"Run over him," whispered Veronica.

I would have liked to act on her advice but it seemed impracticable. We took the road once more. Mercifully nothing else occurred to delay us and we reached the outskirts of Rattlebury at five minutes to one.



Drawn by H. Cutner.

Visitor : "AND HOW DO YOU LIKE THE NEW COOK, BOBBIE?"

Bobbie : "SHE HASN'T COME YET."

Visitor : "BUT I THOUGHT SHE CAME LAST WEDNESDAY?"

Bobbie : "OH, THAT WAS THE OLD ONE. THE NEW ONE COMES TO-MORROW."

"We'll just do it," I said, narrowly avoiding a pedestrian.

"Don't do that," said Veronica. "I can't stand it."

"We're going to be on time," I rejoined.

"We're going to be on the pavement if you don't look out."

We entered the High Street. Fortunately there was not much traffic about and we moved swiftly.

"There's the *Lion*," said Veronica. "On the left. That big, red place with the sign. See it?"

I saw it and said so. At the same time I prepared to turn in by the narrow alley underneath the board.

"What d'you think you're doing?"

"Hold your hand out," I snapped and swung the car to the left. It was a sharp turn.

Judge of my consternation when I beheld, a few yards up the passage way, a new glass door and behind it a very obvious roomful of people. Veronica gasped and clutched my arm. Desperately I felt for the brake, missed it, and touched the throttle. We bounded forward and there was a hideous sound of rending wood and crashing glass. Out of the tail of my eye I saw Aunt Imogen observing our arrival with panic-stricken features. I found the brake and stood on it. Too late! The running-in process was complete. We had accelerated into the lounge.



Jack was nimble and Jack was quick and one day, when no one was looking, he jumped over the candlestick and found himself in Once-Upon-A-Time Land where all the Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales come from.



The first person he met was Little Boy Blue looking very sad. "What's the matter?" said Jack. "A terrible thing has happened," said Boy Blue. "The cows are in the Giant's Meadow and the sheep in his corn and I've lost my horn!"



"Oh, dear," said Jack, "but it can't be lost; perhaps the fairies have hidden it in that hollow tree." As they were hunting about inside the tree, Boy Blue began to cry. "When the Giant finds my cows in his meadow, he will beat me," he said.

Drawn by Peter Fraser + E.L.R.



"Oh," said Jack. "Then we must think of some plan to get them back." "That's just the trouble," said Boy Blue. "I can never think of a plan that's really good, and—" "What's that funny little house up there?" asked Jack, pointing.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

KIDDIES.



"That's where the Old Woman lives in her shoe," Boy Blue told him. "Splendid," cried Jack, and off he ran, followed by Boy Blue. When they reached Shoe Cottage, Jack knocked and the Old Woman answered the door.



"Good morning," shouted Jack (he had to shout because of the noise). "I understand you have a lot of children." "Can't you hear them?" snapped the Old Woman. "There are so many I don't know what to do."



Peter Francis + E.L.R.

"Then perhaps you'd lend them to Boy Blue to get his cows out of the Giant's Meadow?" said Jack. "You can have as many of them as you like," said the Old Woman with a sigh of relief. And so, for the rest of the day, Jack, Boy Blue and the Old Woman's children were as busy as bees and as happy as the day was long, driving the cows out of the Giant's Meadow.

AND THE COWS.



Jack was nimble and Jack was quick and one day, when no one was looking, he jumped over the candlestick and found himself in Once-Upon-A-Time Land where all the Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales come from.



The first person he met was Little Boy Blue, looking very sad. "What's the matter?" said Jack. "A terrible thing has happened," said Boy Blue. "The cows are in the Giant's Meadow and the sheep in his corn and I've lost my horn!"



"Oh, dear," said Jack, "but it can't be lost; perhaps the fairies have hidden it in that hollow tree." As they were hunting about inside the tree, Boy Blue began to cry. "When the Giant finds my cows in his meadow, he will beat me," he said.

Drawn by Peter Frazer + E.L.R.



"Oh," said Jack. "Then we must think of some plan to get them back." "That's just the trouble," said Boy Blue. "I can never think of a plan that's really good, and—" "What's that funny little house up there?" asked Jack, pointing.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

KIDDIES.



"That's where the Old Woman lives in her shoe," Boy Blue told him. "Splendid," cried Jack, and off he ran, followed by Boy Blue. When they reached Shoe Cottage, Jack knocked and the Old Woman answered the door.



"Good morning," shouted Jack (he had to shout because of the noise). "I understand you have a lot of children." "Can't you hear them?" snapped the Old Woman. "There are so many I don't know what to do."



Peter Fraser + E.L.R.

"Then perhaps you'd lend them to Boy Blue to get his cows out of the Giant's Meadow?" said Jack. "You can have as many of them as you like," said the Old Woman with a sigh of relief. And so, for the rest of the day, Jack, Boy Blue and the Old Woman's children were as busy as bees and as happy as the day was long, driving the cows out of the Giant's Meadow.

AND THE COWS.

MR. MARTIN A-WOOING GOES

BY ROBERT McBLAIR

MR. FRANKLIN MARTIN had finished dinner in the restaurant downstairs an hour before and at eight o'clock stood admiringly in front of the mirror of the golden oak dresser in his bachelor flat bedroom. A black suit fitted snugly over his bottle-neck shoulders and folded smoothly round his mildly protuberant middle. Ten years ago he had put on black when his rather querulous helpmeet had been withdrawn into the bosom of her ancestors, but he wore it now from habit and because it seemed to go well with his thinning, grizzled hair. His wing collar made room for his double chin, and a small, black bow-tie chimed in with the black ribbon of his eye-glasses. His brown, right eye regarded the result with calm satisfaction, while his left eye—which was of glass—sparkled with its customary enthusiasm. Mr. Martin was satisfied. He felt that the general effect escaped the formality of evening dress while suggesting the dignity of affluence.

He walked nervously to the window and looked from his fourth floor apartment down upon the shining black bodies and subdued headlights of the motor cars that streamed along the narrow street on their way to the theatres. He had taken Margie to the theatre the night before, and the night before that, he had treated her and her mother—and of course Douglas James had to be squeezed in, too!—to a dance. To-night, then, after so much festivity, would be an excellent time to speak.

Mr. Martin went to the telephone in the hall, taking short, quick steps on

his small, splayed feet, leaning backward and shaking his square, grizzled head from side to side rapidly as if assuring himself of his own assurance. After he had given the number, he stood with one patent-leather toe pointed at right angles, and several times cleared his throat.

"Is that you, Margie?" he inquired of the clear, young voice that answered him. "Listen, Margie, I want to come over—just for half an hour. Something to talk to you about. . . . Yes, it is important. . . . Right!"

He hung up the receiver and went back to the bedroom mirror, nervously pursing his pale lips in a noiseless whistle. Had this been an ordinary occasion, his satisfaction with his appearance would have been complete—but it was not every evening that he, a gentleman of fifty-two, prominent in the tanning industry, sallied forth to propose matrimony to a lady of twenty-one. He combed his thick, grey eyebrows and rubbed a pinch of powder over the pink glow of his pudgy nose. Then he shook a drop of cologne upon a black-bordered silk handkerchief which he thrust neatly into his left breast pocket. After a final look into the mirror, he waddled resolutely down the hall.

He paused to look into the living-room, with its red portières and golden oak desk, bookcase and chairs. There were no curtains at the windows, and a withered fern on the centre table was the only sign of life.

"No more restaurants!" he murmured and, for a moment, imagined a dinner enlivened by Margie's young, laughing eyes. "I'll come home for



Drawn by Morgan Rendle.

The Artist : "DO YOU GET MANY VISITORS DOWN HERE?"

The Yokel : "THAT WE DO, SIR. WITH T' PARSON 'AVING SEVEN SISTERS, IT'S RARE WE DON'T 'AVE ONE OR OTHER OF 'EM STAYIN' WITH 'IM."



Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

"PLEASE, MUM, I'VE SWALLOWED A SAFETY-PIN!"

"OH! SO THAT'S WHERE MY SAFETY-PINS HAVE BEEN GOING, IS IT?"

lunch, too," he added, as he brushed his black derby hat with a practised circular motion against his sleeve.

"Well," he thought as he went out of the front door and pressed the button for the lift, "I'll see her all by herself, and have it out. There'll be no *Douglas* about to spoil things. Drat that boy, anyway!"

The lighted cage stopped on its way down and Mr. Martin bristled slightly when the sliding door disclosed his nephew, Douglas. He wasn't jealous of the boy, of course. What would a man of his dignity and money have to fear from a child of twenty-four? But certain things had undoubtedly occurred.

"Well, Douglas?" he said perfunctorily.

Douglas's blue eyes had eagerly lighted. He was an erect, squarely-built young man, with brass-coloured, shiny hair, a dented chin, short, straight nose and prominent cheek-bones.

"Hello, Uncle Frank!" he ejaculated with unwonted animation. "I was just wishing I could see you to-night!"

Mr. Martin's quiet, right eye regarded his nephew without enthusiasm. He had more than once wished that he had met Margie through someone else, for things as they stood were unquestionably a trifle peculiar and strained.



Drawn by W. J. Rowben.

He: "NOW THAT WE ARE ENGAGED, DEAREST, SHALL I TELL YOUR PEOPLE OR WILL YOU?"
She: "WELL, I GENERALLY TELL THEM, DEAR."

About six months before, when Mr. Martin was driving his blue enamelled touring car out of the garage for an after-dinner cruise, Douglas had stopped him.

"There's a pretty girl who wants to meet you, Uncle Frank," he had said.

Mr. Martin had been lonely that night, fed up with playing Auction with the old boys at the club. It had pleased him—and confirmed him in his own opinion—to discover that his appearance was still such as to attract the feminine eye. Douglas had climbed into the car and they had driven together to call upon Margie Carew.

She lived with her widowed mother in a large, brick house covered with deciduous

Japanese ivy and as they drove up she was seated on the steps of the verandah, chin in hand, gazing at the sickle moon just rising above the humped umbrella trees of the small opposing park. Shafts of misty half-light fell upon the pale roundness of her face and spectrally lit her dark, close-set eyes. The vision stirred a vague something in Mr. Martin's old heart—awakened memories, somehow vivid, somehow lovely, compacted of hoop skirts, and the lancers, and stolen kisses and pink lemonade. There was a reminiscent courtliness in his rheumatic bow as he took off his hat.

"Come with you and Douglas to a dance? Oh, that would be lovely! Just wait till I call mamma."

The next moment Mr. Martin had found himself blinking in the lights of the hall, shaking hands with the mother, who was miraculously ready in a rather low-cut dress of lavender, a black lace shawl drawn over her yellowish-brown hair, which was parted in the middle and curved coquettishly over her ears. The widow's cheeks were tinted—not too much—and there was a brave challenge to advancing years in the becoming artificial emphasis to her brows and lashes; a challenge not unjustified by close-set, lingering, blue eyes and a figure of mature and graceful curves. "One of these middle-aged flirts," Mr. Martin decided, "who somehow catch their man by brute force and unblushing nerve. But she has nice eyes," he added to himself.

Mr. Martin became bitter when they piled into the car and the mother climbed into the front with him. He had been asked to meet the daughter, Margie—it was she who had desired to know him, not her "mamma." He found himself listening to the low murmur of voices from the young folk in the rear, and their occasional bursts of spontaneous laughter. He wondered angrily whether that whippersnapper—Douglas—had intended to introduce him to Margie, or to introduce Margie and her mother to his car.

But these reflections vanished when the two couples were seated about a small, rickety, green table by the dance floor. Margie talked to him exclusively, laughed with him at the dancers and put her hand confidently upon his arm.

Mr. Martin had observed that Douglas was turned a bit sulkily aside, and he had rubbed the bristles upon his shaven chin to conceal his smile of triumph. The music played; a singer rose and sang of love and long ago; the heavy, night air heightened the naturally high

colour of Margie's soft cheek and rippled, as with little waves, the curly mop of her bobbed, chestnut hair. "How nice," he had felt, "to find such a pretty creature waiting at home for me in the evening!" Her downy, fine skin was like a challenge to his heart. The singer's song went to his head like wine. Aloud he had said: "You look bright, Miss Margie—I must tell you about my invention for tanning hides. You see, after the blood and fat are scraped off . . ."

"This is a waltz, Mr. Martin," she had cried quickly. "Do let's dance!"

He had followed her slim, childish figure in the gossamer, black-spotted, grey dress, ridiculously short above her small, high-heeled shoes and slim ankles in filmy, black stockings. He liked the contrast of her green, bead necklace with her chestnut hair and admired her boyish swagger. As he kicked and whirled in the old-fashioned waltz, he saw at a table three of the old boys from the club, and one of them gave him a wink. They would say he was robbing the cradle. Well, a man was as old as he felt, and they could all go to the deuce.

Mr. Martin was blown when the dance ended and it relieved him to find, when the music began again, that the widow Carew herself preferred to rest. They watched the two young people melt rhythmically together in a graceful stiff-legged walk.

"Look how tight he holds her!" Mrs. Carew had smiled. "The dear children!"

Mr. Martin had noticed it, too.

"Yes," he had snapped. "The young whippersnapper! He ought to be kicked!"

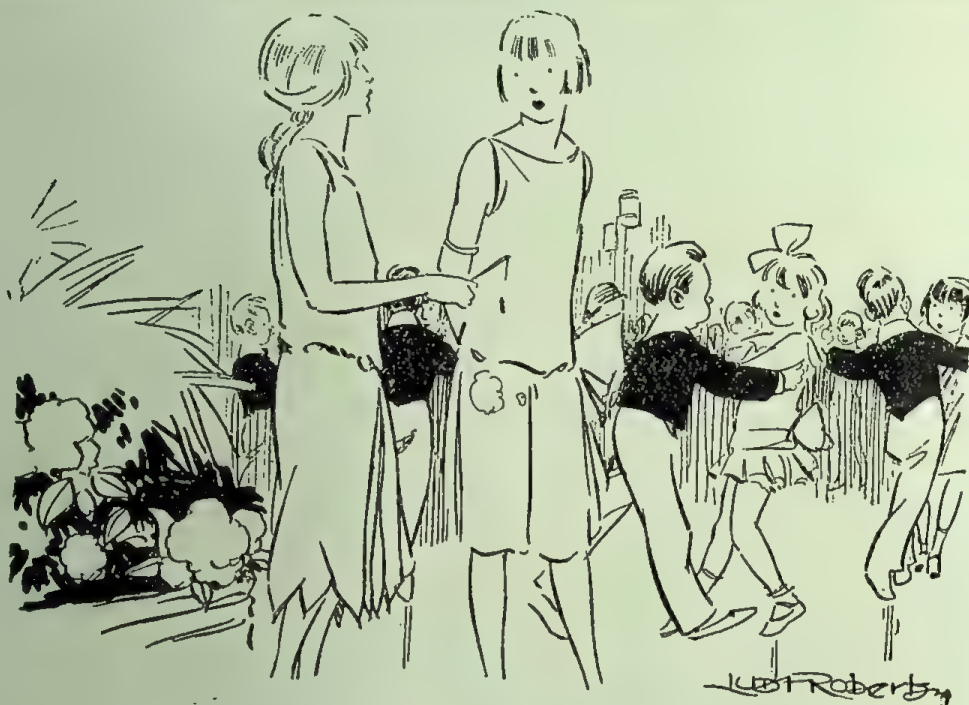
The lift had reached the ground floor and Mr. Martin and Douglas walked through the marble foyer to the street, where Mr. Martin abruptly stopped.



Drawn by Wilmot Lunt.

Doctor (getting information): "AND DOES HE GRIND HIS TEETH IN HIS SLEEP?"

Wife: "OH, NO! 'E DON'T NEVER WEAR 'EM IN BED, SIR."



Drawn by Lunt Roberts.

"GET PLENTY OF PARTNERS?"

"RATHER. UP TO MY KNEES IN BOYS THE WHOLE EVENING!"

"Well, Douglas?" he demanded.

Douglas seemed slightly embarrassed. A flush came over his face and he pawed uncertainly at the pockets of his grey, tweed suit.

Mr. Martin, in spite of the circumstances, had learned to like Douglas. They had been much together in the company of the Carews, and the young man's friendship had helped renew his own youth. Too, there was something honest and clean and soapshiny about the boy's frank face. Mr. Martin liked the way the boy was dressed and eyed enviously the stiff, straw hat with its band of three bright coloured stripes.

"Well?" Mr. Martin repeated.

"I hope you don't think I'm nervy,

Uncle Frank," said Douglas with unusual diffidence, "but Brown told me he was leaving the tannery, and I—I wondered if you'd give me his job?"

Mr. Martin regarded Douglas thoughtfully. Brown *was* leaving, and Douglas probably could fill the bill. And he had only one thing against Douglas.

A sort of rule of war had been tacitly adopted for their evening excursions—that the widow should drive out with Mr. Martin but that Margie should sit beside him coming back. One night about three weeks ago he had seen the widow and Douglas whispering, and coming home the widow had asked to sit up in front—"to keep her hair from blowing." The first time Mr. Martin



Edwin Morrow
 Drawn by Edwin Morrow.

PREPARED !

Sergeant : "'ERE, WOT'S THE MEANING O' THIS GADGET AMONGST YOUR KIT ?"

New Recruit : "THAT, SIR, IS A FIELD MARSHAL'S BATON, WHICH I ALWAYS CARRY—ER—IN CASE."

accepted this without a murmur. But every evening since, she had done the same thing, and he had finally concluded that it was due to a fell design concocted by Douglas. Confronted, however, by the boy's young, frank face, his soft heart was unable to maintain its suspicions. No doubt the fault lay with Mrs. Carew.

"I shouldn't be surprised, Douglas," he remarked irrelevantly, "if Mrs. Carew has plans."

"Plans?" repeated Douglas, his mouth open.

"I mean, I bet she's trying to make a match for herself," Mr. Martin explained.

He self-consciously pulled down his vest and then polished his square fingernails on his sleeve.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, wouldn't that be splendid!" cried Douglas, and stopped. "I mean the four of us," he added, blushing. "With this job, Uncle Frank, I could afford—"

Mr. Martin's feelings towards the blond young man suddenly somersaulted. Obviously, the boy was against him. The old heart thumped so beligerently in his breast that he could hardly breathe. It came to him that, during his long talks with Mrs. Carew while the young people were dancing, Margie and Douglas had been a great

deal together alone. He felt a sudden fierce curiosity to know with what thoughts they had been occupied. And then he remembered Douglas's request.

"Do you think I'd let *you* run my factory?" he shouted. "A mere child! Listen," he added, pointing a blunt finger at Douglas's open mouth. "I'll see you and Brown frying in Hades first!"

He turned his back and waddled down the lamp-lit street and round the corner to the garage.

Like a good many other people, Mr. Martin often acted upon impulse and endeavoured afterwards to reason that his motive had been perfectly logical. "For thirty years I've laboured to build up a business," he reflected bitterly as he backed his car out of the garage, "and now that they think I'm getting old, the children come and ask for it." He felt hurt at the thought and, as he drove along the quiet, moon-lit street, he became suddenly lonely and tired.

"I need somebody who'll fuss over me," he admitted, and swallowed in pity for himself.

The Carew's house loomed out of the dimness and he put on the brakes.

Margie was seated on the top step of the verandah and seemed half unreal in the splotches of moonlight that fell on her gossamer, white dress. She gave him a soft, lingering hand.

"Oh," she sighed, "isn't there something too lovely in a night full of moonlight?"

Mr. Martin spread his black-bordered, silk handkerchief on the steps to protect his trousers from dust and sat down beside her, still holding her hand.

"Moonlight," he began, in the manner of the capable conversationalist, "reminds me of the sulphur we use to tan hides." He had long felt the need of someone to whom he could talk lovingly of the

details of tanning. "Same colour, I mean. Under our process, which I invented, sulphur is used a good deal. You see, after the blood and fat are scraped off——"

Margie suddenly withdrew her hand and he looked round to find that her back was towards him. He judged that she must be displeased, and repressed a sigh. How few people really understand the fascination of tanning!

"Margie," he said, coming right to the point, "will you marry me?"

Margie started, and stiffened, but did not turn her head.

"Now, I don't want you to answer me hurriedly," added Mr. Martin, putting the square tips of his fingers together. "I don't want you to take any step without realising what you are doing. First of all, I might as well admit to you that I am—well, older than you. Not that it matters," he added hastily. "I am not a dead one, by any manner of means." He looked at the back of her head. "I am going to learn the fox-trot," he said.

Margie lifted a hand to the green beads on her chest and, without facing him, opened her mouth to speak.

"Now wait!" he interrupted. "As you know, Margie, I am pretty comfortably off. Two motor cars. Nice flat. Good business that'll bring in money as long as people wear shoes. I used to tell Mrs. Martin, when she worried about things, that the human race would have to go barefooted to bankrupt me. My new process makes that all right. But you don't want to hear about that. Let me see, now, where was I?"

"But, Mr. Martin!"

"Now wait. You'll have your allowance. Like I used to tell Mrs. Martin, I don't believe in a woman coming to a man every time she wants to buy herself



FRANK
WHITBURN.

Drawn by Frank Whitburn.

Prospective Purchaser: "I LIKE THE LOOK OF THE HOUSE ALL RIGHT, BUT I COULDN'T STAND THOSE UGLY BUILDINGS RIGHT IN FRONT OF IT!"

Agent: "OH, THAT'S ONLY A MUNITION FACTORY. IT MIGHT BLOW UP *any day!*"



Drawn by A. R. Cune.

"AND WHY HAS YOUR SISTER NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL, MAGGIE?"

"IF YOU PLEASE, MISS, SHE'S GOT A WOODEN LEG."

"POOR CHILD! HOW EVER DID SHE GET THAT?"

"I DON'T THINK SHE GOT IT, MISS. I THINK SHE WAS BORN WITH IT."

a pretty ribbon. And every summer we'll go to the Continent for a month."

"But, Mr. Martin!"

She turned upon him her frank, close-set, dark eyes.

"Well, what now?"

"You haven't said anything about love!"

"Love?" he repeated, determined to meet any objection. "Why, love, yes, of course. Why, certainly!"

There was a pause. From down the tree-bowered, moon-flooded street came a brief whistle of sharp twirls and rises—like a signal.

"Of course," continued Mr. Martin,

pulling thoughtfully at his ear, "speaking of love—as you were—I don't expect you to be exactly—well, infatuated with me at first. But that will come in time. I used to tell Mrs. Martin: if a man is kind to a woman that's all she wants, I used to tell her. And I've never been rough to a woman in my life. Miss Fillers, my secretary, has been with the company for twenty years, and you can ask her if you want."

"But, Mr. Martin, I mean—you haven't said that *you* are in love with *me*!"

"Me?" repeated Mr. Martin.

"Love?" he enquired. And he



Drawn by Tom Coltrell.

TAXI-DRIVER TRAINING HIS SMALL SON TO TAKE THE MOST ROUND-ABOUT ROUTE.

relapsed into thought. "Well," he demanded, "why should I want to marry you if I wasn't in love?"

Margie expelled her breath suddenly.

"If you love anybody," she explained, waving her plump, moon-pale arms, "you—you want to tell them about it. If you are a man, you wish that she would be carried off by bandits so that you could kill them with your hands and rescue her and—and clasp her to your heart."

"But——" objected Mr. Martin, raising a short, square finger.

"And if you are a girl," Margie continued, more eloquently, "you want to eat chocolates all afternoon in the hammock and think about him. You think that he is as sweet as the chocolates

and every one you eat is just a little bit of him."

"But, Margie," protested Mr. Martin, raising his finger higher.

"And then, when he comes to see you at night," Margie went on, unheeding, "you lean your head against his shoulder and—and talk about the cosy sitting-room you two will have. It will have pink wallpaper, and a pink standard lamp, and a big, soft sofa before an open fire; and in the evening you will sit together before the open fire and dream and dream—and you won't care if dinner is ever ready. You'll just sit before the fire and dream and dream——"

Margie stopped abruptly. The whistle had sounded again, this time appreciably nearer.

"But, Margie!" Mr. Martin objected earnestly, taking off his hat and dabbing at his moist brow with the palm of his hand. "There aren't any bandits now—at least only a few, and they don't get into mischief round about here."

"I knew it!" cried Margie. "I knew you would say that. And that shows you aren't in love. Love . . ." said Margie, and lingered over the word. She waved her plump arms vaguely. "Love means bandits. Or it means something the same as bandits. Not real bandits, but you think about them. It means the girl you love is walking across a field and is about to be gored by a maddened bull. Then, if you love her, you dash forward and attract the beast's attention to yourself, so that when she falls in a swoon, you will leap lightly aside as the bull rushes and pick her up and carry her in your arms to safety."

Mr. Martin had seen maddened bulls in the stock yard. The thought of stepping into a field with one and deliberately attracting its attention caused his toes to curl up involuntarily.

"But, Margie, now, how many times have you been chased by a bull?" he demanded, trying to introduce an element of logic.

"I don't care," she said. "Love is either bulls or bandits, or something the same."

In the silence that fell footsteps could be heard approaching along the opposite foot-path. A whistle, holding a note of impatience, trembled the dewy air. Margie got up, smoothing down her filmy, white dress.

"I came here specially to-night," said Mr. Martin, rising and brushing the seat of his trousers, "to ask you about this—ah—matter. And——"

"Listen," interrupted Margie earnestly. "I'll tell you. I'll leave it to Mamma.

She's in the drawing-room. You go in and ask her. I've got to—I've got to go down to the corner. Go straight in."

She assisted him forward, with her hand on his elbow, so that he scarcely had time to pick up his handkerchief from the step. He waddled hesitantly across the verandah and into the pitch-dark hall. He wasn't anxious to discuss the matter with Mrs. Carew. He struck his knee sharply against a small, invisible table and cried, quite plainly, "Darn!" At that moment the drawing-room door opened, throwing a subdued radiance upon the top of Mr. Martin's grey head, bobbing up and down as he rubbed his knee. Margie's mother said:

"You poor boy! What's the matter?"

"I bumped my knee," answered Mr. Martin irritably.

He accepted the unspoken invitation and hobbled into the drawing-room.

"Sit down here," said the widow Carew, whose rebellious figure was confined this evening in shiny, black silk. She gave the sofa pillows a gentle pat, fixed an extra pillow behind his head, took his hat and fanned him.

"No," Mr. Martin objected.

But she held down his protesting arm and he resigned himself and leaned back. There was something very peaceful about the widow Carew. It was reflected in the dark, comfortable furniture and quiet lighting of the high-ceiled room.

"You must be warm and uncomfortable after driving through the traffic here," she said in a motherly tone. "Now you just rest."

But Mr. Martin remembered the purpose of his call, and sat up. Mrs. Carew stopped fanning and pressed the edge of the derby into her faintly-tinted, oval cheek. Her throat was soft and white against the V of her black silk dress, and her close-set, blue eyes



Drawn by Geo. Davey.

"POOR FELLOW! AND WHAT DO YOU WORK AT?"
 "INTERVALS, LADY—ONLY AT INTERVALS."

looked coquettishly sidewise and upwards at him under her thin, arched brows.

Mr. Martin took a deep breath.

"Mrs. Carew," he began—but the sight of his derby pressed against her cheek made him suddenly self-conscious. He avoided her warm, understanding eyes and endeavoured to concentrate his thoughts upon the red shade of the tall, standard lamp. He started counting its golden tassels, then realising how foolish this was, he stopped. "It is warm, isn't it?" he ventured.

"You poor boy," murmured the widow, and Mr. Martin, feeling uncomfortable, pointed his patent-leather

toes together and studied the pattern of the red, Turkey rug. He cleared his throat.

"Mrs. Carew," he obstinately began, "there is something I—ah—that is—"

He paused, and the widow, enveloping him in a luminous caress of her close-set, blue eyes, made a soft, cooing noise behind his hat.

"Well," he blurted, "you know—it must have been apparent to you that I have been coming here a good deal!"

"You have been so sweet to us." There was a pause. "I don't know how I ever got along without you," the widow added in a low tone.

Mr. Martin pressed a palm to his



Drawn by Leslie P. Marchant.

Shop Assistant: "YOU CAN HAVE THIS LENGTH OF SILK FOR NOTHING, BUT DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT. (Confidentially) YOU SEE, WE'RE ONLY DOING IT AS AN ADVERTISEMENT!"

forehead and found it moist. He had a desperate feeling of being swept from his feet and into dangerous and unfamiliar depths.

"Oh, no," he answered, realising that he must brace himself. He felt that the remark sounded incomplete so he added, "Not at all," and subsided.

"Mrs. Carew," he ejaculated, after a frantic moment of counting the tassels, "you know a man of my age doesn't come round as often as I have unless he has a reason."

"Of course, Mr. Martin!" The widow's voice expressed surprise and a warm note of understanding.

Mr. Martin swallowed dryly.

"I mean," he hastened to explain, "a man wants to settle down. I used

to tell Mrs. Martin that I never would marry again if I lost her. But a man needs companionship."

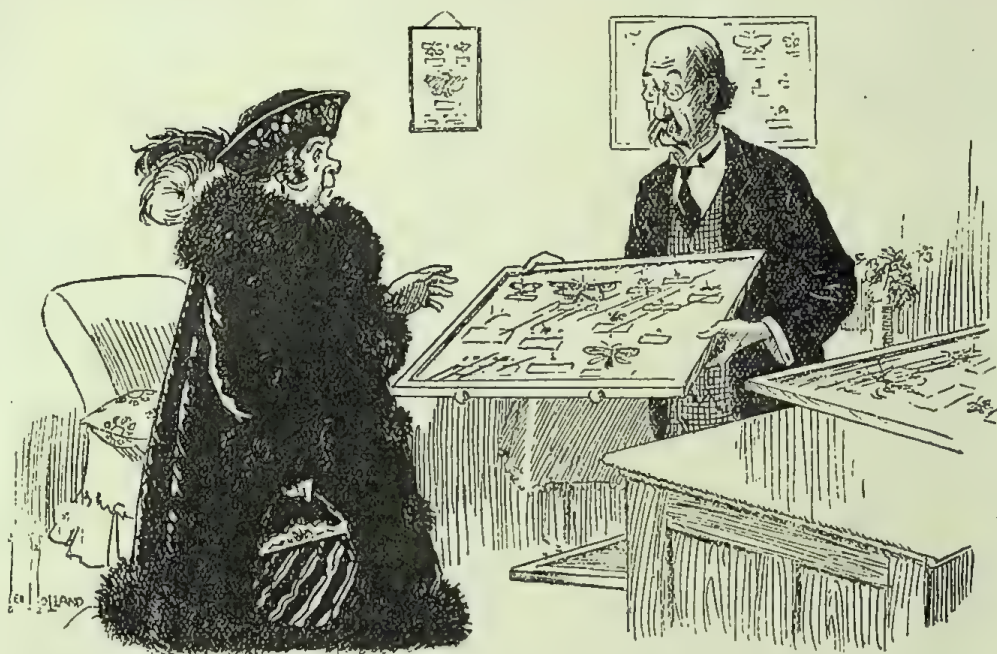
"Of course he does," cooed the widow, and Mr. Martin stirred uneasily. "Poor dear man!" sighed Mrs. Carew.

"I haven't said anything before," he continued, "because naturally a man wants to be sure. I was afraid some people would think it was strange—a man of my age."

"Your age!" cried Mrs. Carew. "Why, you're in the prime! Only yesterday I said to Margie, I said, 'Why, he's in the prime!'"

Mr. Martin sought to conceal the pleased wrinkles about his mouth by rubbing his chin with his palm.

"Well, that's another thing," he



Drawn by George Holland.

Visitor (being shown host's collection of butterflies): "IT MUST HAVE BEEN A TERRIBLE BLOW TO YOU WHEN THE POOR THINGS DIED!"

added. "I didn't know what you would say."

"What I would say!" she protested; "why, Frank—I mean, Mr. Martin, how could you think that!"

"So," Mr. Martin concluded, "I thought I would ask you."

The hand that had been on his sleeve slipped into his palm. He felt something tickly against his chin, looked down and found the widow's yellowish-brown head upon his shoulder.

"Oh, Frank," she murmured against his coat, "this is so—so unexpected!"

Mr. Martin grew suddenly rigid and stared with a protruding right eye upon the red, Turkey carpet. Several moments passed before he was able to catch his breath. Then he hopelessly relaxed.

"Now, I've gone and done it!" he said to himself.

The room seemed unnaturally silent, but Mr. Martin, for once, was at a loss for words. He saw that he would shortly be considered, by both Margie and her mother, a Lothario of the most unpleasant type. All because the widow, poor thing, had allowed herself to yield too soon to the impulses of her heart.

He freed his left hand and patted the widow's head. He felt sorry for her and, at the same, time he noticed a very agreeable, very feminine fragrance. This was the first time for years that anyone had come to him in an impulse of affection and, for some reason that he did not understand, his eyes smarted. He released his right hand from the widow's grasp and put that arm about her

shoulders. Mrs. Carew captured his left hand again.

"Frank," she murmured in her soft, round voice, "I am so happy!"

"There, there!" said the manufacturer, and patted her shoulder.

He was trying to think. He put his face against her hair. It was soft and fragrant. He felt unreasonably contented and closed his eyes.

"I am happy for myself," continued the widow Carew, "and I am happy for Margie."

Mr. Martin's eyes opened suddenly. For the moment, he had forgotten Margie.

"She ought to have opportunities," said Mrs. Carew. "She's a queer girl—not like most. I don't mean to say anything against her," the mother added in a hushed voice, "but I think she has temperaments!"

Mr. Martin was silent. He was a little hazy about the meaning of 'temperaments,' but it seemed to recall whispered confidences between his departed wife and her female visitors.

"Some good doctor," he murmured vaguely.

"I haven't been able to do much for her," said Mrs. Carew, "and she's getting restless. She wants to study music—unless she gets married."

"Of course," agreed Mr. Martin, "unless she gets married."

He sat up and removed his arm.

"What's the matter, dear?" asked the widow.

"My arm went to sleep," Mr. Martin disingenuously replied.

"And," the widow continued, "I've been worried about her lately—since she's been in love."

"What?" the suitor ejaculated.

"Yes," the widow affirmed, laying a hand affectionately upon his arm. "I know it. I can tell by a hundred ways.

But she's so secretive. Of course I *think* I know who it is. But it might be any one of three or four. That's one reason I am so happy. Now I can get your advice on things like this."

Mr. Martin swallowed dryly, and bit furiously on the end of a long, fresh cigar. He had indeed raised Cain. The situation was as clear as day. Margie loved him. He remembered how she squeezed his hand when thanking him and saying good night. He remembered their understanding silences on their drives home from theatres and dances. She had put him off for the moment—that was woman-like and natural. Regardless of the mistake Mrs. Carew had fallen upon, his moral obligation was plain. He really couldn't break the little girl's heart.

The widow rose, set a standing ash tray by Mr. Martin's elbow and lighted a match for the fresh cigar. And, strange to say, as his duty became plain, Mr. Martin's inclination veered the opposite way. "I need somebody who'll look after me," he thought, and remembered with aversion his promise to learn the fox-trot.

"You are a man of the world," the widow murmured, pushing a foot-stool near him. "A woman is lost," she added, "without somebody strong and wise to lean on. The first time I met you"—she put a pillow behind his head—"I said to Margie—I said, 'There is a man with brains, Margie.'"

Mr. Martin relaxed a bit and rubbed the grey stubble on his chin.

"And then, sure enough, the first thing I learned about you was that you had invented a new way of tanning hides. Tell me just how you do that, now. I've forgotten."

Mr. Martin drew upon his cigar.

"Well, first," he began, "after the blood and fat are scraped off——"



Drawn by Morgan Rendle.

"NO, SIR. I 'AVEN'T MANY FRIENDS NOWADAYS. JIM BIGGS AN' SAMMY GREEN IS THE ONLY TWO I VISITS."

"REALLY!"

"YES, SIR. THEM'S THE ONLY TWO IN THE VILLAGE WOT 'AS CHAIRS AS'LL 'OLD ME."



Drawn by Alfred H. Taylor.

Teacher: "THAT GENTLEMAN IS SIR IAN McLANCEY, THE STEEL MAGNATE. NOW, CAN ANY BOY TELL ME WHY HE IS CALLED A MAGNATE?"

Bright Youth: "YES, TEACHER. BECAUSE OF 'IS LEGS!'"

"Yes?" the widow cooed. Her look of abstraction went no further than to make sure his cigar was lighted and the foot-stool under his feet.

For an hour and a quarter Mr. Martin told how he had come to work out his patented process. Mrs. Carew had heard it all before, but no one would have guessed that from her gasps of admiration and astonishment. Her interest was unabated—even when he described his courtship of his departed wife.

"We were too poor to be married," he said with sentiment, "but my employer saw me kiss her one night in the moonlight. I suppose it must have reminded him of his own courting

days, because he raised my pay the next morning, and a week later we stood up before the parson together."

"You are a wonderful man, Frank!" sighed the widow, and would have placed her head upon his shoulder.

But Mr. Martin, as he returned from his journey into the past, became conscious of the complications of the present. He felt inextricably entangled in a web of femininity and thought with yearning of his empty flat. There, at any rate, he would have a chance to think things over in peace. And the quiet of the verandah suggested that Margie was away, and that he could escape without further embarrassment.



Drawn by Lunt Roberts.

"IS MRS. BROWN AT HOME?"

"NO, MA'AM. SHE WAS BLOWN UP BY THE GEYSER YESTERDAY, AND SHE WON'T BE DOWN FOR A WEEK."

"I think I'll be going," he remarked rather abruptly and picked up his hat. But he thought that before leaving he had better do what he could to justify himself in the eyes of God and Mrs. Carew. "Whatever happens," he said from the doorway, raising his square hand in a declamatory gesture, "remember that I was never one to *intentionally* wound a woman's heart. See you tomorrow," he finished, and closed the drawing-room door firmly behind him to shut off pursuit.

As he gingerly picked his way along the dark hall he was alarmed to hear from the verandah the murmur of voices. It was a relief to know that, if Margie was there, someone was with her. He

decided that he would hurry past, as if he didn't see her. If she called him, he could run.

He felt a gust of anger at the whole situation. What he had wanted for the future was a good dinner ready in the evening, his slippers by the easy chair and an appreciative listener—like the widow Carew—waiting to hear the events of the day. It was typical of the fix he was in that he had asked Margie first.

Just before he emerged from the hall, the voices ceased. Mr. Martin couldn't resist a glance toward the swing-chair at the end of the verandah. He was genuinely shocked to see a single silhouette against the chiaroscuro of wistaria leaves and moonlight. As he watched, the

single silhouette divided and two shadowy heads drew demurely apart.

Mr. Martin for a moment felt the convulsive pang of one who has been betrayed. But as he stamped furiously down the steps his perspective began to change. He saw Margie's affectionate gestures with him as merely the natural response of a young girl to the fatherly kindness of an older man. Strangest of all, he recognised this with a sense of profound relief. But he couldn't help an almost fierce desire to know what young scoundrel had cut him out. And then he saw, on the newel post at the foot of the verandah stairs, a stiff, straw hat, whose red, blue and black stripes were distinguishable even in moonlight.

Mr. Martin took two steps along the walk before he stopped still in his tracks. And then he did something on impulse which no doubt later he would justify to himself by logic.

"Douglas!" he cried savagely.

"Yes, sir," came from the shadows. The swing-chair squeaked. Douglas's yellow head and grey suit appeared in the moonlight as he came down the steps. "Did you call me, Uncle Frank?"

Mr. Martin pointed a square finger at the shoulder of Douglas's grey, tweed coat.

"What's the meaning of that powder?" he demanded fiercely.

Douglas raised his shoulder and looked down at the smudge of face powder. Then he lifted his blue eyes defiantly.

"That's my business!"

"It is, eh?—you young scoundrel!" Mr. Martin shouted. "Do you remember asking me for Brown's job?"

"I do," answered Douglas, thrusting out his chin.

"Well, then," snapped the manufacturer, "I am going to give it to you. Hear that? And I'm going to make it

a job big enough for two. Y'understand?"

Douglas's mouth had fallen open. His blue eyes were staring.

"Do you intend to get married, young man?" Mr. Martin demanded.

Douglas grasped his uncle's hand and squeezed it in a grip that hurt. His eyes were moist and he seemed to have difficulty in trying to swallow. Before he could speak, there came a gossamer whirlwind from the porch which enveloped Mr. Martin and clung to him with two plump, white arms.

"Mr. Martin," gasped the whirlwind, "you are a *real* man. And a darling! And listen, Uncle Frank: you and I have a secret. Do you know what it is? A secret no one shall ever learn."

For a moment Mr. Martin blinked at her, not gathering what she meant. Then he understood, and he saw beneath the bobbed hair and thin, arched brows two close-set, dark eyes bespeaking a soul that in kindness and integrity, if not in years, was as mature and reliable as his own. He stooped and kissed her hand.

"God bless you, my children!" he said.

The old-fashioned formula came straight from the depths of his old-fashioned heart. He smiled upon them for a moment, then turned and waddled down the brick pavement to his car. He climbed in, started the engine and swung into a long, peaceful ride by the river. His heart was so full that it almost hurt, and it was as if twenty years had been rolled from his shoulders. He broke a habit of decades and lighted a fifth cigar.

"Surely," he thought masterfully, "after a man has arranged the happiness of four souls in one evening, he is entitled to an extra cigar."



Drawn by Peter Fraser.

Doctor : "AH, I SEE IT ! IT'S A HAIR LODGED IN YOUR THROAT."

Wife : "AN' WOT COLOUR IS THE 'AIR, MAY I HASK ?"

CAMEO CRITICISMS

*"'Tis with our judgments as our watches—none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own."*

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- ALDWYCH.** "*It Pays to Advertise.*" An amusing farce imported from the U.S.A.
- AMBASSADORS.** "*The Pelican.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- APOLLO.** "*The Fool.*" Melodrama. The story of a man who took the Christian doctrine very seriously. Personally, we shall not go again.
- COMEDY.** "*The Creaking Chair.*" A second rate mystery drama.
- COURT.** "*The Farmer's Wife.*" Of light construction, this humorous, rustic comedy is really quite pleasing.
- CRITERION.** "*Fata Morgana.*" The English version of the well-known Hungarian play, with some real acting.
- DALY'S.** "*Madame Pompadour.*" A sparkling musical comedy with some real singing.
- DUKE OF YORK'S.** "*The Punch Bowl.*" Palatable fare in the shape of an attractive and diverting revue.
- FORTUNE.** "*Sinners.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- GAIETY.** "*Poppy.*" Musical comedy. If it were less drawn out, we should like it better—especially if a little humour were introduced here and there.
- GARRICK.** "*The Rat.*" An Apache play which proves—more or less—that there's some good in the worst of us.
- GLOBE.** "*Our Betters.*" We think more palatable fare is offered elsewhere.
- HAYMARKET.** "*Old English.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- HIPPODROME.** "*Leap Year.*" Excellent entertainment of its kind, with Mr. George Robey in an ingenious disguise.
- KINGSWAY.** "*Yoicks.*" If you miss "*Yoicks*," you miss very little.
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- LYCEUM.** "*The Merry Widow.*" No need to paint the lily.
- LYRIC.** "*The Street Singer.*" Musical comedy. Easily the best in London.
- NEW.** "*The Hour and the Man.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- PALACE.** "*The Co-Optimists.*" Their eighth programme—and their best.
- PLAYHOUSE.** "*White Cargo.*" A vivid play by Leon Gordon. Stark, sensational, sombre and well acted, nevertheless——!
- PRINCE'S.** "*The Blue Peter.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- PRINCE OF WALES.** "*Charlot's Revue.*" Pretty thin.
- QUEEN'S.** "*The Show Off.*" Produced too late for criticism here.
- ROYALTY.** "*Storm.*" A more or less entertaining play in which the interest is rather too much diffused.
- ST. JAMES'S.** "*The Nervous Wreck.*" A rollicking, American farce. Don't go—unless you want to laugh.
- ST. MARTIN'S.** "*In the Next Room.*" A sinister mystery play of murders, thrills, and complexities.
- SAVOY.** "*The Sport of Kings.*" A farce-comedy. Look in one evening.
- SHAFTESBURY.** "*Toni.*" A new and amusing musical comedy, featuring Miss "June" and Jack Buchanan.
- STRAND.** "*Tiger Cats.*" Danish drama. Rather sordid.
- VAUDEVILLE.** "*The Looking Glass.*" Revue. We have one at home that pleases us more.
- WINTER GARDEN.** "*Primrose.*" Musical comedy. Lively and irresponsible and likely to keep on blooming.
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